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IN THIS ISSUE

JONATHAN NORTON LEONARD
Short Story Schools

ARTHUR RUHL
Reviews "Kneel to the Rising Sun" by Erskine Caldwell

HENSHAW WARD
Reviews "Wish and Wisdom" by Joseph Jastrow

ROBERT DISRAELI
News Pictures of the Month

CLARENCE DAY
Money Matters

ERSKINE CALDWELL

"Those capable of appreciating his work will accept bestiality and horror if they seem to have some significance. It's another matter when one gets the notion that they are being exploited for their own sakes" . . .

(See page 5)

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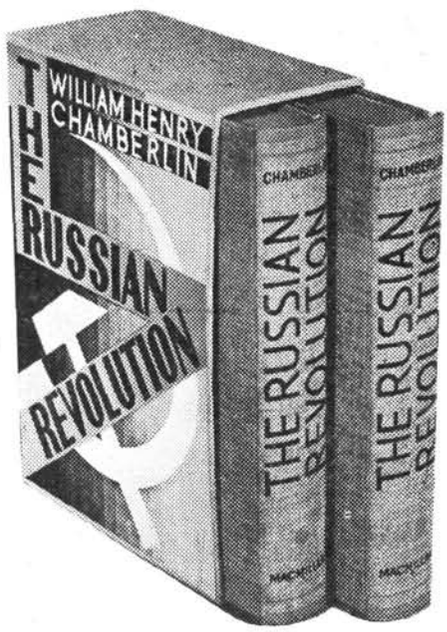

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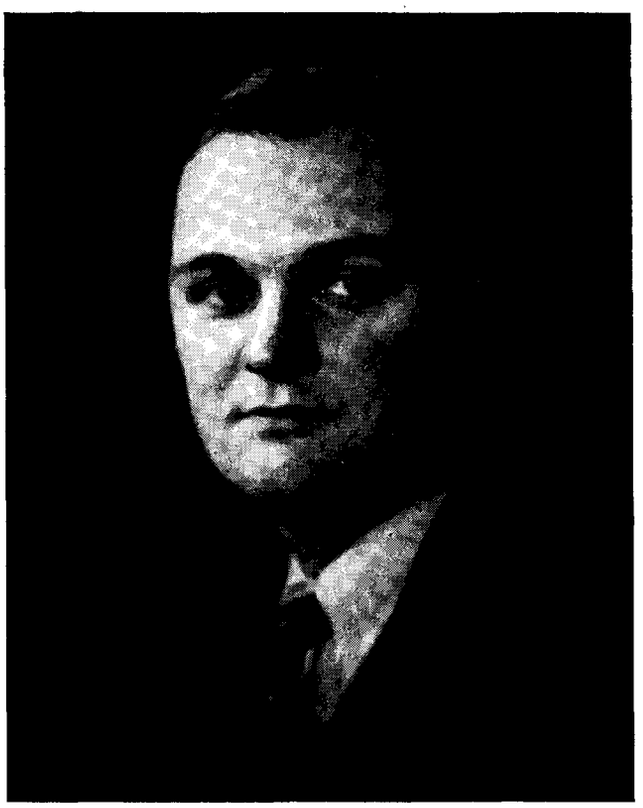
Short Story Schools

BY JONATHAN NORTON LEONARD

IN the summer of 1925 I attended a "short story school" in a nice New England village. On the whole I spent an agreeable six weeks. I made the acquaintance of an attractive female textile worker. I climbed a mountain. I gained ten pounds.

But the "course" itself had a curious effect upon me. It left me wholly disgusted with all short stories. I did the work and was praised by the professor. I constructed a large number of characters and fitted them into a rigid mechanical form. But when I got through, I didn't write another word of fiction for nearly nine years. Such was my personal experience with story schools. I believe firmly that if I had not gone to that nice New England village, I should have sold my first story at least five years sooner.

My own experience, of course, is not necessarily typical. I shall not refer to it again. In this article I shall try to evaluate short story teaching by a sort of statistical analysis, and by collecting opinions of other writers.



JONATHAN NORTON LEONARD

Before I go any farther, I should like to define what I mean by a "short story school." I do not mean a course in story-writing at a legitimate college or university. This is a reasonable way to teach English composition. It is possible to find a good deal of fault with the methods used and the results accomplished, but at least the teachers are people of good intention. They don't raise false hopes of large financial success, and they don't confuse the student with too much emphasis upon mechanism and plotting.

Neither do I mean the coaches, critics, and agents, some of whom give personal attention to authors and manuscripts. Nor do I mean the fiction courses connected with university "schools of journalism." According to the U. S. Office of Education there are thirty of these schools. Their primary purpose is to train reporters and newspaper editors. They have swamped the newspaper business to such an extent that their graduates find it almost impossible to get jobs. But this is also the case with many other types of professional school. The results may be disappointing, but the motives are noble.

There is nothing noble, however, about the commercial, advertised story schools —mostly correspondence schools—which promise fame and fortune to every would-be writer who pays them the requisite fee. Practically all these poor creatures are doomed to disappointment. They can't sell their stuff. The market is far too small. They *don't* sell it. Most successful writers are entirely self-trained. The schools know this perfectly well, but year after year they continue to extract large amounts of money from the flattest wallets in the nation. In return they give practically nothing but heartbreak and rejection slips.

I am not going to waste my limited space in attacking individual schools. This has been done before. Each school claims in defense that it is "different," that it does actually "train" its suckers successfully. I shall attempt to head off this rejoinder by considering the schools as a group.

The story school business is founded upon two fundamental popular delusions. The first is the widely-held belief that there is lots of big money in short stories. The second is the conviction that "anybody" can write them if properly "trained." The story schools have fostered and utilized these delusions. Their advertising is largely responsible for the thousands upon thousands of pathetic strivers who spend their time and money trying to find the pot of gold at the end of the short story rainbow.

Practically all of the schools advertise in the same way. The first step is to convince the prospect that a very large amount of easy money is waiting for him behind the editor's desk. A certain school, for instance, gives an idyllic picture of the successful writer's life, its independence and earning power. The others follow the same model. Another school tells the applicant that he is on the road to fame and fortune, and he is given a professional welcome. That's the start-off. We'll see later what element of truth these statements contain, but the effect on the poor farmhands and housewives who read them may be guessed without difficulty. Like Christ on "the high place," they have been shown all the kingdoms of the earth. They at once begin to ask what chance they have of acquiring this wealth themselves. The story schools generally provide the answer in the next paragraph.

The answer is very direct and to the point. *Anybody* can write successfully. One school says it in so many words, disposing at once of the possibility that there may be such a thing as inborn talent. Others may be more lengthy about it, but they all come to the pleasant conclusion that training and hard work are the only requisites. Just leave it to them.

In general the practice of the schools is

(*Continued on next page*)

Next Week

SOCIOLOGY AS A SCIENCE
By JULIAN HUXLEY

AMERICAN MESSIAHS
By "UNOFFICIAL OBSERVER"
Reviewed by Herbert Agar

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AUTHORS OF REJECTED MANUSCRIPTS
Photographed by Robert Disraeli at the recent Hobby Show in New York.

to assure the most ignorant, dull, and ill-equipped person that he (or she) can become a successful story-writer merely by paying his money and following instructions. Most of them ridicule the idea that any sort of talent or education is necessary.

When they think they've convinced the prospective pupil that big money awaits the dullest aspirant, the schools bring out their testimonials and success stories. To a professional writer these are unconvincing in the extreme. Well known names are conspicuously absent. Most of the testimonials tell of single sales to pulp magazines or farm papers. Often articles and news pieces are included, although these have nothing whatever to do with short story writing. Dates are seldom given, which suggests that the sales were made years ago. Some former pupils state that they are "selling regularly," but I have yet to see convincing evidence that any one of them at the present time is making a decent, dependable living by writing stories.

The schools seem to realize that their testimonials are not very impressive. To correct this flaw they dazzle the prospective student with the names and often the photographs of famous writers who have had no connection whatever with the school or its course. In the booklet of one school, for instance, appears a brief account of a famous author's career. It does not state that he was "trained" by the school—as of course he was not—but a careless or ignorant reader would be likely to count him as a graduate. I can see no other motive for the school's using his name. Some schools have managed to get permission to use the names of established writers, the Lord knows how. Often they try to convince prospective students that they taught these men how to write.

This is how the aspirants are gathered in. First they are told that there is an enormous amount of money to be made out of short stories. Second they are assured that "anybody can write." And third, they are shown testimonials which "prove"—if examined uncritically—that many of those who take the courses become successful writers.

After the student has paid his fee, which ranges from $12.50 to more than $100, he sets to work on the course. This generally consists of weekly lessons or "assignments." The student is told to write about incidents from his own life, to describe a friend or acquaintance, to practise dialogue. Each course has its special features. Some go in for "scientific psychology." Some ask the candidate to submit plots. Some give outlines for amplification. The more expensive courses provide an elaborate textbook, usually by the professor himself.

I am not going to waste time describing the courses. It is not important that some are "better" than others, for all of them are practically worthless. It is my personal opinion that they are actually harmful. They either confuse the would-be writer with technical complications or they train him to follow a pat formula, to the destruction of any native literary charm he may possess.

I am not depending upon my personal opinion, however. I am going to support it by a statistical method to show how useless the courses are—roughly how many hopefuls they gather in, and how many of these receive worthwhile reward in return for their expenditure of money and effort. The story schools have been denounced before. They are always denounced in professional writing circles whenever the subject comes up. But I think a little statistical analysis will be more convincing than any amount of indignant opinion.

The first step toward this evaluation is to determine how many schools there are. This figure depends to some extent upon the definition. With the aid of various government bureaus and the so-called "writer's magazines" (which few real writers ever read) I have collected twenty-eight schools which offer correspondence courses in short story writing. Some of them will also teach other kinds of writing as well, but they have little call for such service.

These schools are of various sizes. One of them "trains" eight hundred students a year and receives from each the good sum of $85. Another enrolls fifty students a month, 600 per year. In general the schools are not very free with their figures. They speak vaguely of "thousands" or "hundreds." But I think I am very safe in assuming that the schools average about 500 students a year, some bigger, some smaller. I don't see how they can pay for their advertising or support their staffs on a smaller number. And if each pupil pays an average of $30, the schools extract at least $420,000 every year from the short story hopefuls of the nation.

Not included in this list are several large general correspondence schools which offer courses in story writing. But I am not going to use these to increase the above figure appreciably. I shall leave it at a round half-million per year. Part of this amount is contributed in small driblets—a few dollars for "criticism." Part is paid for expensive, elaborate "courses." I am certain that the actual amount is much larger, and I am equally certain that more than the thousand students contribute to it every year. But for the purpose of this article I shall leave it incontestably conservative.

$500,000 a year from 10,000 hopefuls! This figure is a sizeable tax upon the pitifully small resources of would-be writers. Now I am going to try to estimate what return these poor aspirants get upon their investment. First, I shall estimate how much money the magazines pay out for short stories. Then I shall estimate by a statistical method what part of this sum goes to the graduates of the schools. The number of writers which this final sum will support should indicate with fair accuracy the number of graduates who have made a professional success in the short story field.

First we'll take a look at the magazine business. It's a half-billion dollar affair. There are several thousand magazines—the exact number depending upon the definition of the term. Some have vast circulations. Some pay large sums for fiction. But this impressive set of facts does not mean that there is a living in the business for large numbers of short story writers.

In the first place the overwhelming ma-

(Continued on page 10)

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Seventeen Tales by Erskine Caldwell

KNEEL TO THE RISING SUN. Seventeen short stories. By Erskine Caldwell. New York: The Viking Press. 1935. $2.50.

Reviewed by ARTHUR RUHL

THERE'S no denying the "kick" of these stories—the kick of a mule, sometimes—nor the fine economy of their craftsmanship. Nobody at all interested in the technique of the short story can be indifferent to them. The way the thing itself—character, scene, the ultimate thrust, generally that of horror—comes through, in a minimum of words, with nothing of the writer, seemingly, hanging to it, unburdened by the least touch of literariness, is superb in its way.

If these tales were the first of their kind, not read in the light of other examples of Caldwell's work, one might leave it at that. But so read, it is a bit hard to escape now and then a certain sense of being tricked, of being the victim of a pose which is no less a pose because the stuff in hand happens to be more or less subnormal humanity instead of the fancier varieties with which pose and snobbishness are usually associated.

In other words, isn't Mr. Caldwell, with his unbroken procession of animalistic negroes, decadent share-croppers, and sadistic white bosses, leading us on a bit? Aren't his chosen material and "stark" realism, instead of being something which springs instinctively from his inner consciousness, now and then merely a newfangled device for "shocking the bourgeois"?

An uneasy feeling of something of the sort does come over one in reading one or two of these stories—"Masses of Men," for instance. A man worked for a street-railway company for thirty-five years and then was killed by an automobile while jacking up a rail to replace a rotten tie. The company never gave the widow anything and when she called at the office nobody seemed to know anything about the matter. They didn't know which "Hugh Miller'" she was inquiring about. The woman and her three children get colder and hungrier until finally the mother brings in a man to rape her ten-year-old daughter while she takes the quarter he gives her and goes out to buy a loaf of bread and a little meat.

About "Kneel to the Rising Sun," hideous as it is, we feel differently. An abject negro share-cropper stands helplessly by while his fiend of a white boss chops off the tail of the negro's hound-dog with his jack-knife—just to torture the dog and plague the negro. The latter's old father, on short rations like everybody else on the place, wandering off in the dark in search of something to eat, falls into the hog pen and is half eaten up by vicious hogs. The son and his pal, the one black on the farm who will stand up to the owner, drag out the body in the middle of the night and wake up their boss.

The negro with some gumption tells the latter that the boss knows good and well how the old man happened to be eaten up by the fattening hogs. The boss flies into a fury, whangs the negro with a single-tree, and the negro finally runs away. The white posse which soon gathers forces the abject cropper to tell them where his friend has gone. The white men shoot the latter down like a coon. In a kind of delirium, the negro who has helped to kill his best friend staggers homeward across the ploughed field, falling every now and again, then struggling to his knees to face the rising red sun.

There is bestiality and horror enough here, goodness knows, but given the neighborhood, the custom of share-cropping, and the humans concerned, the story has, nevertheless, a certain logic. It not only "could have happened," but it has a certain heroic quality in the sense that the poor helpless Lonnie and the vicious Arch Gunnard are by way of being symbols of masses of men—exploiters and exploited—of something bigger than themselves. And in the telling, in the rhythm and sense of life, there is a certain macabre beauty.

Caldwell once said of himself that "all I am, I attribute to my dislike of reading books. I'll read anything in print I can put my hands on if the medium is a magazine, but I dislike books as I do a steel trap."

All very well for a young writer of stories like Mr. Caldwell's at the moment of his being "discovered," piquant and in character, and possibly his idiosyncrasy may actually have helped to preserve his earthy style from contamination. But Mr. Caldwell is now regarded as a serious artist; whether or not he reads books, he writes them, and in the nature of things he addresses an intellectual élite. For he isn't a primitive bard twanging the lyre for his own people. If the sub-normal types which preoccupy him as subject-matter ever read at all, they would be the last to be interested in such tales as these. Those capable of appreciating his work will accept bestiality and horror if they seem to have some significance. It's another matter when one gets the notion that they are being exploited for their own sakes.

Disaster de Luxe

THE LEFT-HANDED PASSENGER. By Felix Riesenberg. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1935. $2.

Reviewed by WILLIAM DOERFLINGER

HERE is a melodramatic novel of high life *en route* from Havana to New York, pictured against Captain Riesenberg's compelling vision of the sea. A story of mystery and love-making on shipboard, it moves with swift precision and steady pace, like the liner *Cortez* bearing northward her expensive cargo of men and women engrossed in each other's personalities, for varying motives, and by the same token oblivious of the menace of the ocean and themselves.

The author is an old hand with ships and salt water. In his novels he is primarily interested in personalities, often making excellent use of sea backgrounds. He peoples this book with a rather appalling group of rich tourists—many of them typical—and lets us watch them burn their fingers and finally their ship, with the loss of a number of lives. Few of the protagonists, unfortunately, get their just deserts. The murderous Left-Handed Passenger is courted, for his criminal personality, by ladies and policemen with equal vigor. It is no particular satisfaction to see him come off so well in the end; but this is an unmoral tale.

George Platt Lynes
FELIX RIESENBERG

To revert to material considerations—Captain Riesenberg has woven this yarn of inverted values around a sea disaster similar to that which set the world to asking indignant questions last September. A supposedly fireproof vessel burns within sight of land, drowning and cremating half her complement. Why? Like many others, this reviewer read the newspaper accounts analytically and betook himself to Asbury Park, where the sands were thronged with citizens viewing that great, blackened hulk with its boat-falls swinging mournfully in the on-shore breeze. The holocaust was never adequately explained. It has remained for Captain Riesenberg to trace imaginatively a natural chain of circumstance, involving the polite crimes and passions of the first cabin, the sort of thing no vigilance could forestall nor the fates duplicate, but which might well have been responsible for a similar maritime disaster.

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The Story of "Pseudology"

WISH AND WISDOM. By Joseph Jastrow. New York: D. Appleton-Century Company. 1935. $3.50.

Reviewed by HENSHAW WARD

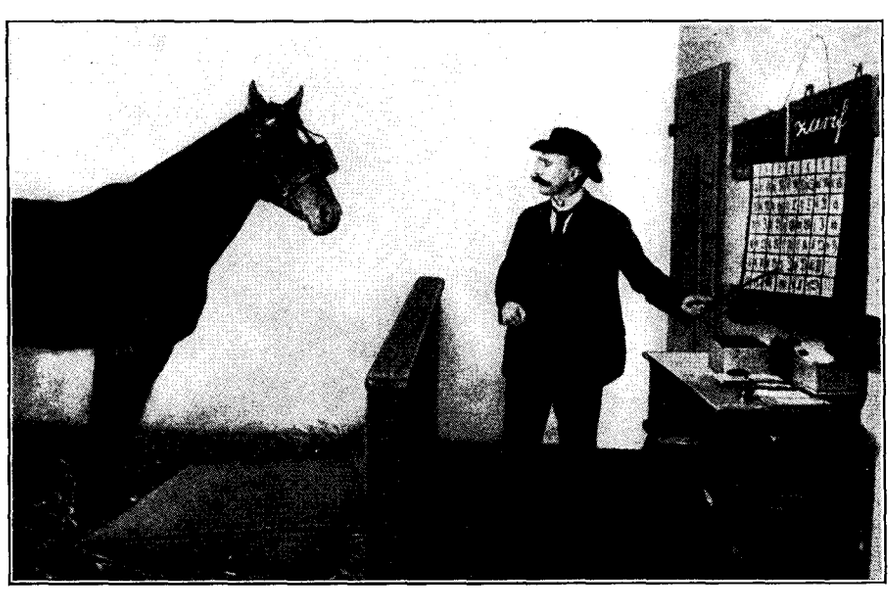
DR. JASTROW'S purpose is the most ambitious and useful one that can animate a modern intellect: to make a true anatomy of what most thinking is. In his introductory chapter he gives a preliminary view of the chief elements in thinking: (1) He is telling "the momentous story of man as a framer of belief." (2) The plot turns upon the fact that "mind in the quest of wisdom is ever spurred by *wish*. (3) The most common form of thinking is *thobbery* (a name derived from a verb that the "New International" calls slang), which is defined as "Thinking out an Opinion that pleases us, and Believing it." (4) Thinking is a product spun by the brain, an *autistic* manufacture which the spinner supposes is a discovery of something outside his brain. (5) Thinking is a process of animistic explaining; it is "the mighty medicine." (6) "Wish and Wisdom" deals with two main currents, *folklore* and *doctrine*; its "story of belief is replete with verbal magic." (7) In sum: "We still fail dismally, and in every phase of human endeavor, to live the life of reason."

Such a multifarious display looks like a formidable complication, as Dr. Jastrow fully appreciates. He therefore warns the reader that his first chapter will be better understood if it is read after the tales which make up the body of the book. This is good advice. For no one can credit or understand our dismal failure to free ourselves from baseless doctrines and autistic spinnings until he has absorbed the facts which are presented in the narratives that fill the twenty-seven chapters that follow. They are entertaining chapters, even if they trend toward a disheartening conclusion.

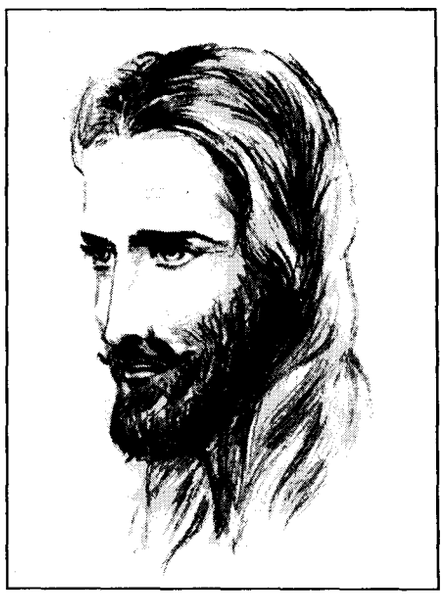
But Dr. Jastrow does not lead his readers to discouragement. He is not a top-lofty psychologist who presumes to show the intellectual world what it must do to be saved, nor does he argue that the only valuable form of thinking is scientific. His business is to exhibit the record of human thinking, to show how largely it has been carried on by the "pleasure principle," and how recent and small is the amount of "reality-tested thinking."

The display of the human passion for untested thinking includes a wide range of characters, from Lucian's Alexander to Professor Richet. There is the story of Conan Doyle's "completely disordered mental machinery" that believed in fairies. There are narratives of the solemn belief in the ouija board, Paladino's table, Miss Morrison's visions of old Versailles, Hélène Smith's communications from Mars, Patience Worth's romances, the calculations of Krall's horse; there are descriptions of skull science, psychometry, Od, auras, and the "hundred banners under which the vibrationists marched."

Does such a list suggest that Dr. Jastrow has relied too much on antique or exceptional examples? Of course these wild follies do illustrate what has always been, and now is, typical of the operations of the mind. They are fair illustrations. But great skill is needed to make them appear fair. As the reader encounters them in "Wish and Wisdom," massed in a long sequence of irrationalities, they fail to take hold of him as evidence of what he himself is likely to be guilty of when he thinks about NRA or a planned society.



KRALL'S CALCULATING AND READING HORSE, ZARIF
Photographs on this page from "Wish and Wisdom."



ASTRAL PORTRAIT OF KOOT HOOMI

They remain too remote from his own mind and from the creative thinking that is now pouring in a flood from his greatest contemporaries. They seem too much like a gallery of freaks, too little like an account of how the best brains work now, everywhere.

What is the "wisdom" which the title announces? Not till we reach the Afterword do we find an effort to make clear the distinction between "the errors of constructive science" and the one deep error of "pseudology." The distinction is plain in Mr. Jastrow's mind—there is no doubt of that; perhaps he has made it plain to minds that are more discerning than mine. I hope so; for "pseudology," a word coined by Dr. Jastrow, will accomplish much if it can ever be sharply defined, so that it can pass current with one unmistakable meaning. It is said to imply mental acts which are not directed by "a logical discipline" along "the straight path of reason." But who has defined *logical* or *reason*? It is generally supposed in the learned world that Millikan and Dewey and Tugwell are logically disciplined. Yet their intellectual peers call them irrational when they argue for their kind of God or education or utopia. Mankind will never learn the difference between wish and wisdom until some definition of rational has been established.

In the last five pages of the book this definition is hinted at. We are told that irrational persons have "a feeble sense for fact, a faulty sense of proof." What seems to me the likeliest clue is "a private revelation" on page 385. I wish that Dr. Jastrow had put my hands on some one clue that could be followed confidently by all bewildered souls who are as lost as I am in the mazes of the meanings of *rational*.

Henshaw Ward is the author of "The Circus of the Intellect," a work in which the theory of "Thobbing," to which Dr. Jastrow refers in his book, is set forth.

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Plantations and Politics

PROBLEMS OF THE NEW CUBA. REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON CUBAN AFFAIRS. New York: Foreign Policy Association. 1935. $3.

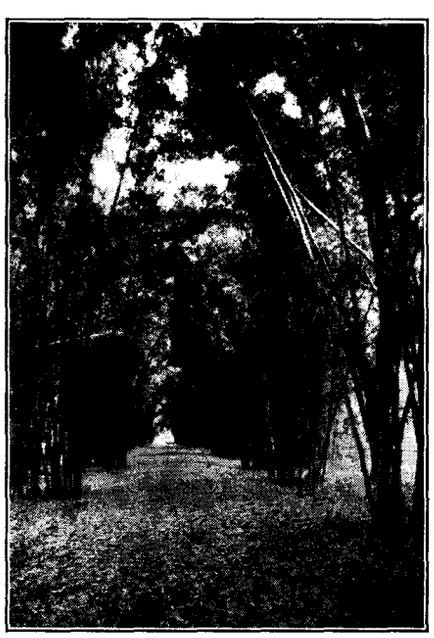
Reviewed by DERWENT WHITTLESEY

THE questing mind will find here a rare opportunity to understand the "why" of Cuban political upheavals. Following a sketch of the recent turmoil, its causes are discussed under some ten heads, in such a way as to picture intimately the economic and the social life of the country. Finally a program for amelioration is proposed.

A compilation of chapters on diverse subjects by different authors is likely to make hard reading. But this book is gratifyingly clear and interesting. Technical topics, such as the banking system and the legal control of sugar cane, are made easy for the lay reader. If two or three chapters fail to hold the attention, they may be skipped, since the conclusions are recapitulated in the final chapter.

The core of the book is inevitably the story of the sugar industry, and the vivid portrayal of the economic life on sugar plantations mirrors not Cuba alone, but the whole plantation world. The social life is less convincingly depicted, because through its story runs an implied rejection of any standard and style of living different from that of the United States. This failure to recognize the unalterable variation of human existence in accord with different environments is an all too common error of students of society, and it is far less flagrant in this book than in most.

A dominant impression, left by evidence accumulated in chapter after chapter, is the affrighting power of a big country over a little one which happens to lie within its geographic orbit. Such diverse items as sugar tariffs, laws governing landholding, public utilities, the bond market, ownership of sugar mills, currency, and financing the sugar harvest through the banks—all these are controlled by the inescapable weight of the neighboring United States, regardless of the motives of Americans concerned. A secondary, but likewise recurrent theme, is the overdevelopment of Havana relative to the rest of the country, and the consequent chasm between dwellers in the metropolis and the provincials.



ROAD THROUGH BAMBOO FOREST
From Hudson Strode's "Pageant of Cuba."

The crux of Cuba's problem is stated as both agrarian and political. This is followed by the program for reform, which in its major outlines seems both moderate and wise. Here again, however, the incurable distinction between the tropics and the middle latitudes is sometimes lost sight of, as in the following instances. The food ration given contains some items which will astonish most seasoned dwellers in low latitudes. The virtues of soils are overestimated. New commercial crops are not so easily grown and marketed as is assumed; the suggestions urging coffee growing and dairying are especially dangerous—the one because of present overproduction, the other because of unsuitable natural conditions. A lucrative agriculture is posed on a beef cattle industry which has no basis in either experience or prospect. Forest plantings in Cuba, as everywhere else on earth, require fostering by the government; this is not mentioned.

Among the practical remedies suggested for Cuba's ills, increasing the reliance on subsistence agriculture is fundamental. Neither permanent economic improvement nor social amelioration can be hoped for as long as the country is at the mercy of the unpredictable fluctuations of the world sugar market. A survey of soils is proposed as the means of finding out which land should be kept under sugar and the minor cash crops. This is a good start in the direction of practical geography. So are the two maps showing present and prospective use of the land in a sample district; but in addition to these a map displaying earth conditions, especially relief and drainage, would permit evaluation of the argument proposed for altering the pattern of land utilization.

In a number of places optimistic conclusions seem at variance with the evidence they summarize. Perhaps it was the policy of the Commission to attempt to be helpful in this way. Perhaps in their enthusiasm some of the members merely lost sight of the bitter truths stated under the head, "The Political Problem." Unless these political problems are solved, all the suggested social and economic improvements which rest on legislation either in Cuba or in our own country, must lie fallow.

Derwent Whittlesey is a member of the department of geology at Harvard.

MARY AGNES HAMILTON

A Chance to Live

SENTENCED TO LIFE. By Mary Agnes Hamilton. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1935. $2.50.

Reviewed by S. A. NOCK

FROM the jacket, one gathers that this is a novel which concerns itself with the possibility of promoting the cause of peace by the murder of a statesman who is interested in war, and with the effect on the lives of the murderers of such an assassination. As a matter of fact, the attempt to do away with Naseby, the Foreign Secretary who endangers the cause of international peace, is merely the event which ultimately enables Jerry Dorset and Rosny Nelhaven to find themselves.

In the words of the violinist Anchor Carolus, who is the friend and guide and salvation of Jerry and Rosny, the two young protagonists are "children of an age which does not know how to live, or why it lives." Of the post-war generation that was for years a lost generation, vainly trying to place themselves in an apparently unintelligible and worthless world, and without the intellectual power to overcome the confusion of their emotions, Jerry and Rosny are about done for before they have had a chance to begin living.

Anchor Carolus, the musician, and Ann Farquhar, the artist, help the young and bewildered couple, show them that there is a life, if only in and of themselves, which is beautiful and real. And at the end Jerry and Rosny find in themselves and each other that which makes for serenity.

"Sentenced to Life" is a good story, well told, filled with entertaining and interesting characters; but perhaps it is the tone of the book which is of chief importance. For it is a firm and proud affirmation of life, a farewell to the despair and pointlessness of the post-war period, an assertion of the validity of human existence in this world. It is not a profound book, but it is an encouraging one.

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The Saturday Review
of Literature

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Books and Mass Psychology

CROWD psychologists, from Le Bon to Ortega y Gasset, have impressed upon us that people behave less intelligently in the mass than they do as individuals. They will be swayed in crowds by emotions which, if alone, they will recognize as cheap and unworthy. This is common knowledge.

Out of the discoveries of the crowd psychologists there has arisen the concept of the mass-man—the man whose behavior is always on the mass level, the victim of demagogues, the unit of aggressive majorities. Following the lead of Ortega, such writers as Ralph Adams Cram, and more recently Albert Jay Nock (whose contribution, in a slightly mock-serious vein, appeared in a recent *Atlantic Monthly*) have formulated the hypothesis that the mass-man is actually a lower form of evolution that *homo sapiens*, and they are demanding that the anthropologists describe and classify the mass-man as the missing link.

On the other side, propagandists from the left assure us that individualism is dead, in all of its manifestations from the "rugged" individualism of commerce to the ivory tower of art. The only chance for salvation, in their view, is to become a unit in the mass. It is a very dreary outlook.

Or rather it would be, if we accepted these theories at their face value. But the concept of the mass-man is one that is likely to run away with the popular essayist, who forgets that he is dealing with a concept and not a reality. The fact is, as the best of the crowd-psychologists are careful to point out, that everybody is part mass-man and part individual in varying proportions. With some, the resistance to mass pressure breaks down more easily than with others.

Suppose that, say, two hundred average men spend the afternoon reading in a public library. They will choose a wide variety of books to read, they will derive widely differing benefits or pleasures from reading them. They will depart in orderly fashion, and you will not know, unless you ask them, what their opinions are of the books they have been reading.

Now suppose that later in the evening these two hundred men go to the movies. When the news-reel is shown, you will be able to observe some mass behavior. President Roosevelt's image will be greeted with applause, except by a few intrepid souls who will hiss; Hitler's by hissing, except for a possible few who will applaud. In some neighborhoods, a controversial figure in a news-reel, Coughlin or Long for instance, can charge the atmosphere to the point where every one in the audience feels it.

This direct power is one that books can seldom exert. Reading a book is a private affair, and a man reading a book is by the nature of the case a man acting as an individual. This is a highly suggestive fact, and may contribute to the explanation of many things: for one, why there are not more books read and sold; for another, why many really influential books make their influence felt slowly and over a long period of time. And conversely, it suggests that books do not provide the best medium for mass propaganda, under the name of "proletarian" or any other.

The Snows of Yesteryear

The ephemeral nature of popularity was never better illustrated than in the exhibition of "New York in Fiction" now open to the public in the Museum of the City of New York. Here, gathered together with novels of less circulation, are some of the best-sellers of bygone years. Alas, for the vanity of authors! Who except the curious student of literature ever looks into them today? Susannah Rowson's "Charlotte," for instance, believed to be the first book having the City of New York for its setting and said to have sold more than any American novel not excluding "Uncle Tom's Cabin,"—is there one out of every thousand of avid readers of fiction who has ever even heard its name? And how many of the far greater number who know the title of Ann S. Stephens's "Malaeska or the Indian Wife of the White Hunter," the first dime novel with New York for background, ever looked inside its covers?

What makes for this subsidence of a novel's popularity, for the complete evaporation of the reputation of authors who once counted their readers in numbers in every hamlet of the country? In the first instance, we should say, a shift in public taste which outmodes manner or subject matter, and leaves what to one period seemed pertinent or revolutionary to another old-fashioned or stale. And in the second, the fact that the wide public which makes a best-seller does not demand outstanding literary quality in the books it takes to its heart. Which latter reason is, of course, part and parcel of the first. For supreme genius, even great talent, can transcend hour and theme, and by lifting its material to the plane of the universal invest it with interest for all time. A cross-section of popular literary history such as the exhibition of the Museum of the City of New York presents, only throws into relief once more the fact that between facility and distinction yawns a gap which time, taking no reck of momentary cloaking circumstances, remorselessly reveals.

Books and the War

War books, like many other commodities, are subject to fashions, and to the law of supply and demand. While the war was in progress, the only war books people would read were those which sentimentalized and glorified the war. For a few years after the war, all war books were unpopular. Realism, coming from France in Barbusse's "Le Feu," eventually crossed the Atlantic; and from about 1923 we were getting such books as Dos Passos's "Three Soldiers" and Cummings's "The Enormous Room." From then on, the point of view in war books and plays has not essentially changed; "The Case of Sergeant Grischa," "A Farewell to Arms," "All Quiet on the Western Front," and "Journey's End" are unmistakably alike in condemning war; so was the picture book, "The First World War," and most recently of all, so is Humphrey Cobb's "Paths of Glory." It is encouraging that for over ten years this should have been the dominant point of view among imaginative writers on the war, and that it should have in so many cases met with overwhelming public response. We hope it really means what it seems to mean—that there are many thousands who either remember, or have learned from books, enough about the last war to put up a substantial opposition to the next.

Ten Years Ago

In the corresponding week of 1925, The Saturday Review did not recommend "This Mad Ideal," by Floyd Dell. Louis Kronenberger wrote in his review: "*Far from carrying Floyd Dell beyond his achievement in 'Moon-Calf,' the latest of his novels is only a reworking of the old material . . . written from a formula.*"

Nor did The Saturday Review recommend "Supers and Supermen," by Philip Guedalla. "*A very bad book,*" said M. R. Werner, well known biographer of Barnum and Brigham Young, in his review in the same issue.

Today

The Saturday Review does not recommend:

KNEEL TO THE RISING SUN. By Erskine Caldwell. See review on page 5.

YANKEE KOMISAR. By S. M. Riis with Arthur J. Burks. See review on page 12.

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Letters to the Editor: *Princeton Seniors and "If"; Are Young Writers Defeatist?*

Kipling at Princeton

SIR:—I had occasion today to make a rapid journey to Princeton. I hadn't seen it for exactly twenty-five years. I had almost forgotten how beautiful it is. . . .

In the Princeton library I found a shelf of duplicate volumes for sale at 50c apiece. I found (and bought) a copy of Kipling's Verse (Inclusive Edition, 1885-1918). You (or F. P. A. will do it for you) will recall that "If" has been the favorite poem of Princeton seniors for a good many years. Here are the facts: The duplicate copy was worn to shreds. The bookmark was at page 250: "When Earth's Last Picture Is Painted." "If" was one of the 28 poems checked in its index, but there were no tear-marks. The library slip in the back bore the following three dates—the slow finish of a Princeton Kipling:

Sep 29 '33
Feb 27 '34
Mar 27 '34

DAVID MCCORD.

Princeton, N. J.

Talents of Youth

SIR:—In response to your editorial query about young writers of today I'm moved to reply, in spite of the tricky complexity of the subject, that they are in general not defeatist. I'm using as a basis for my opinions the half dozen college students of definite writing ability who have come under my tutelage. I have no sentimental illusions about the younger generation. Their self-importance and frank contempt for their elders are often intolerably galling to me. But they seem to me to have an honesty and simplicity which give them a singularly direct approach to reality. As far as it is possible for man to depart from illusion they have gone, and yet they have a vitality and ardor which keep them definitely out of the defeatist rank.

The Victorians were feverishly engaged in proving to themselves and to the world, by dint of much rationalization, that life has a pattern. Many of the moderns have been energetically engaged in proving that it hasn't. And now the more thoughtful of our youngsters are so much interested in the thing-in-itself that they don't worry about such things as Divine Justice (the Victorian theologian's answer to the skeptic) or the sordid chaos so popular in the literature of the past fifteen years. Of course there's a pattern, they would probably say if forced into abstractions, although it's frequently the fascinating design of an artist gone psychopathic.

Something both salutary and terrifying happens when a teacher relaxes into purple patches or too facile generalization. The unclouded gaze of the students who think for themselves betrays an ill-concealed impatience, which does more to eliminate sloppy teaching than an army of visiting trustees could do.

Young writers today are quite as alive to profound truths as their seniors although they are more inclined to write of those truths in concrete terms. Sometimes they're guilty of immature violence and of mistaking melodrama for drama, but for the most part their creative activities are remarkably free from platitude and defeatism. I wonder what these young people will do with their talents.

VIRGINIA ELLIOTT CAMPBELL.

Lewiston, Maine.

"MY WIFE CAN DO 6,000 WORDS A DAY—BUT NOT ON A TYPEWRITER."

Dickens and "Israfel"

SIR:—There is another amusing "point" in Hervey Allen's "Israfel." On page 424 of the one-volume edition (p. 529 of the two-volume Doran edition of 1927) Mr. Allen visualizes the meeting of Poe and Dickens in a Philadelphia hotel in 1842. "Evidently the big-bearded man with the deep eyes, bright green necktie slipped through a diamond ring under the then unusual stiff linen collar, and a velvet vest with a gold chain and cameo dangling across it, found the young man with the olive complexion . . . an interesting person."

But in 1842 Dickens was only thirty, and all his hair was on his head at that period of his life, as the Maclise portrait (reproduced in "Israfel") shows.

New York City. EARLE WALBRIDGE.

"The Eighth Sin"

SIR:—The undersigned is compiling a census of known copies of Christopher Morley's book, "The Eighth Sin." This material, with historical data, will receive publication as soon as the results of the search appear to justify. Will owners of the book, or those who know where copies exist, kindly write, stating if the books contain author's inscription?

ALFRED P. LEE.

235 So. 15th Street,
Philadelphia, Pa.

The Facts in "Paths of Glory"

SIR:—It should scarcely be necessary to defend a work of fiction on the ground that it is true to fact. But since Captain Cohn has raised the question of truth in his review of "Paths of Glory," we ask *The Saturday Review*, in fairness to the author, to point out the authorities cited at the end of the book, which Captain Cohn apparently overlooked:—

> All the characters, units, and places mentioned in this book are fictitious.
>
> However, if the reader asks, "Did such things really happen?" the author answers, "Yes," and refers him to the following sources which suggested the story: *Les crimes des conseils de guerre*, by R.-G. Réau; *Les fusillés pour l'exemple*, by J. Galtier-Boissiére and Daniel de Ferdon; *Les dessous de la guerre révélés par les comités secrets* and *Images secrétes de la guerre*, by Paul Allard; a special dispatch to *The New York Times* of July 2, 1934, which appeared under this headline: "FRENCH ACQUIT 5 SHOT FOR MUTINY IN 1915; WIDOWS OF TWO WIN AWARDS OF 7 CENTS EACH"; and *Le fusillé* by Blanche Maupas, one of the widows who obtained exoneration of her husband's memory and who was awarded damages of one franc.

As to Captain Cohn's remark, "It is perfectly known that the same incident occurred in all armies"—the following figures may be of interest.

Death sentences by court martial followed by execution during the war:

In the French Army—1,637.

In the U. S. Army—None (for military offenses).

MARSHALL A. BEST

The Viking Press, Inc.,
New York City.

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Short Story Schools

(*Continued from page 4*)

jority of magazines use no fiction whatever. Most of them are trade papers of various kinds, generally staff-written and usually devoting themselves chiefly to short articles praising the products of their advertisers. Another large class comprises religious, fraternal, and other special-interest publications. They may use a small amount of fiction here and there, but they pay little or nothing.

There are plenty of people supported by these magazines, but they are not short story writers. They are usually staff experts on taxis, diesel engines, Holstein cattle, or Baptist missions. For the professional story writer there are only two serious markets — the "slicks" and the "pulps." Of these the "slicks" come first.

Most important to writers are the "big circulation" weeklies. There are four of them—the *Saturday Evening Post, Collier's, This Week,* and *Liberty.* The *Post* uses about 225 short stories a year and pays from $500 up. The "up" is very high, but $1,200 each will certainly cover the average. *Collier's* and *This Week* are somewhat lower. *Liberty* is a great deal lower. The group as a whole does not pay out more than $750,000 for short fiction. Count the stories, consult agents, and figure it out for yourself if you don't believe me.

Next come the "big" monthlies (*Cosmopolitan, Pictorial Review, Good Housekeeping,* etc.). There are ten of them. They each use about six stories a month and pay an average of $700. Their total is not above $500,000 a year. Besides these there are eight "quality" monthlies (*Scribner's, Harpers, Atlantic,* etc.) They use a few stories, but they pay less than the big monthlies. We'll put them down for a total of $30,000. It's a compliment.

Finally come the pulps (*Black Mask, Ranch Romances, Astounding Stories,* etc.). The Authors' Guild lists forty, including those mentioned here, as wholly reliable. Many others, of a different kind, however, are fly-by-nights with uncertain addresses and trick bank accounts. But we'll include them all—about ninety. They use around seventy million words of fiction a year, for which they pay one cent a word. A few pay slightly more, but many pay less, and many are largely staff-written at very low rates. Their total is $700,000, which includes "novels" and "novelettes" as well as short stories.

This ends the list of primary markets. If the short story writer can't hit one of these, he'd better go out of the business, for he can't make a decent and dependable living anywhere else. The juveniles don't pay enough to matter. Neither do the religious or special interest publications. Newspaper syndicates use very few first-run short stories and pay very little.

There are, to be sure, a number of "allied" and "secondary" markets. Most of the serials in the "slicks" are written by novelists, but an occasional short story writer branches out into the serial field. A few more pick up extra money in nonfiction.

The chief secondary markets are book publication, foreign magazines, and movies. The first two are very small. Few short stories are collected into books. Few sell in England or on the Continent, and the income from this source is overbalanced many times by the money paid to foreign writers. As for the movies, they do not buy many short stories. They buy plays, serials, best-selling novels. Few short stories contain enough material to make a full length movie. But to cover the "allied" and "secondary" markets I am going to add fifty per cent to my base amount. This is more than enough to head off quibbles.

Let's see where we stand. I'll pretend to be a statistician and put it in tabular form.

"Big" weeklies	$ 750,000
"Big" monthlies	500,000
"Quality" monthlies	30,000
Pulps	700,000
Total	$1,980,000
Plus 50%	990,000
Grand total	$2,970,000

That's all. There isn't any more. Three million dollars, of course, is serious money, but a three million dollar industry is an extremely small one for a country the size of the United States. Short stories rank a little above fishnets ($2,680,000, 1931), but they fall well below the annual cranberry crop ($3,900,000, 1931). The vast amounts to be made in the business are a popular delusion and a tribute to the power of the printed word. There is just as much money in fishnets or cranberries, and much less competition.

We are not primarily interested in the amount of money earned by short stories, but in the number of professionals which this sum will support. When a writer becomes well established, particularly in the "slick" magazines, his income is apt to be rather large. Therefore it would not be correct to allow each writer less than three thousand dollars a year. At this rate the three million will support one thousand writers. There's no income available for more.

It is already obvious that short story writing is not "for the many," as the schools like to assert. Even if the profession were filled *entirely* from the ranks of story-school graduates, it would accommodate only a minute fraction of the ten thousand "trained" every year.

This brings me to the second phase of my research—to estimate how many of the thousand writers *have* been school-trained. I suspected, of course, that the proportion was small. But I had no idea it was as small as it actually turned out to be.

My first step was to write to the nineteen authors whose short stories appeared in five recent, consecutive issues of *The Saturday Evening Post.* I got fifteen replies—a very good score, as any questionnaire dispatcher will testify. I asked them if they had ever taken a course in short story writing. They all answered that they had not. I asked for opinions on such courses. Three said nothing. The rest thought they were either useless or harmful. Several were very picturesque and emphatic. One man contributed information about fourteen successful writing friends. None had taken a course. Others described the careers of smaller numbers. Every time the story was the same.

I supplemented this questionnaire with inquiries among my personal friends and their acquaintances. In all I gathered information about thirty successful "slick" writers, allowing an ample margin for possible duplications. Absolutely none had been trained by the story schools. Absolutely none had a good word to say for them.

These writers were not "hand-picked" for my purpose, but even so I do not consider thirty out of six hundred slick writers a sufficient number to base my statistics upon. If I did, I would credit the story-schools with *none* of the successful slick writers—a conclusion suggested also by the fact that no well-known names appear among their testimonial givers. So I am going to be very generous with the schools. I shall assume that if I had made one more inquiry, it would have been positive. This will give the schools one writer in thirty-one, or less than twenty out of the six hundred. (Try and find them.) They will get one thirty-first part of the "slick" money, as estimated above, plus fifty per cent. Which works out to $62,000 a year.

I followed the same method with the pulps. As I expected, the schools did a little better in this field. The pulps are by far the easiest market to hit, but even here the schools supplied only one writer in ten. All together they cannot earn more than $105,000 a year.

Let's have another table:

		Per Year
Slick money (plus 50%)	$1,920,000	
1/31 to graduates		$ 62,000
Pulp money (plus 50%)	1,050,000	
1/10 to graduates		105,000
Total to graduates		$167,000

Allowing three thousand dollars a year to each writer, this sum will support in modest comfort no more than fifty-four professionals. And if each writer remains in the business for fifteen years—an extremely high vocational mortality-rate—there will be room for *less than four* new story-school graduates per year.

I repeat. Each year *less than four* story-school graduates establish themselves among the thousand professionals. This is the total effect of all the activity described

(*Continued on page 12*)

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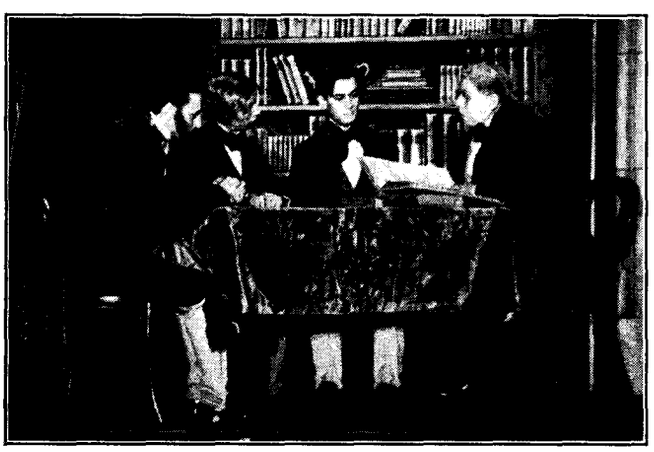
Visiting Authors et al (Smith)

Saturday Review News Pictures of the Month by Robert Disraeli

Not a woman's club lecture but a literary tea for Al Smith (above, right), whose new book is "The Citizen and His Government." Publishers Cass Canfield and Eugene Saxton (Harpers) at Mr. Smith's right. . . . (Left, top to bottom) Sax Rohmer shows what a British author does on arriving in N. Y.

(Above) Emile Gauvreau ("What So Proudly, etc.") hails Don Gordon, book commentator, at publisher's vodka party.



Jesse Stuart, Kentucky mountain poet, on his first visit to New York. . . . (Left) Halleck, Irving, Dr. Cogswell, and J. J. Astor represented in N. Y. Public Library pageant.

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Short Story Schools

(*Continued from page* 10)

in the first part of this article. More than 10,000 hopefuls are lured by promises of easy fame and fortune. They pay their money, which few can afford, for what they have been led to believe is genuine vocational training. And *only four* receive a living wage for their investment in money and effort.

I believe I have been very generous to the story-schools. I have credited them with twenty of the "slick" writers, although I did not hear of a single one. I gave them an ample percentage of the pulp writers. And I added fifty percent to what I think the magazines pay for short stories. But even if we add a further hundred percent to the earnings of the graduates, we still have a pathetic record of disappointment. One success out of each 1,250 failures!

This isn't a very encouraging prospect for the hordes of story aspirants, and I'm afraid I haven't helped them much except in a negative sense, by warning them. My intentions were good, however. So I am going to devote the rest of this article to suggesting how they may look for genuine assistance, if they think they need it. Most of my advice, I'm afraid, will be negative also. But that can't be helped.

The basic trouble is the extreme disproportion between the number of people who want to write for the magazines and the number who do write or have other legitimate connection with the business. There are probably at least a hundred seekers after advice to every person genuinely qualified to give it.

Most of the writers I know were in some sort of contact with the writing business long before they achieved any kind of success. They had worked for magazines or publishers. They had friends who wrote. They had taught in colleges or they had started with books, some classes of which are much easier to sell than short stories.

So the best thing to do, I think, is to sneak up on a professional in some adroit way. An editor or an experienced writer can give certain types of advice. It won't make a "millionaire author" out of a farmhand or even out of a Ph.D. with no gift for writing, but it may remove a few of the technical obstacles.

This justifies to some extent such institutions as the Bread Loaf Conference, where successful professionals may be consulted by hopeful aspirants. I have heard several favorable comments upon Bread Loaf. One very successful writer says that five per cent of those who go there are capable of being helped. These *are* helped to some extent. The other ninety-five per cent are beyond help. They merely "go home and tell the village reporter about the writers they have met." This is pleasant, I suppose. Some of the students are attractive young women, which is pleasant for the writers.

Failing such contacts, I can think of no promising way to proceed. There are, to be sure, a number of ex-editors who act as coaches and critics. I have heard of two who seem to be approved by writers who ought to know their business. But the would-be writer should be extremely cautious. Don't fall for the "successful short story writer" who has gone into the coaching business. If he were actually successful, he wouldn't bother with such stuff. The amount of legitimate money to be made in this way is very small.

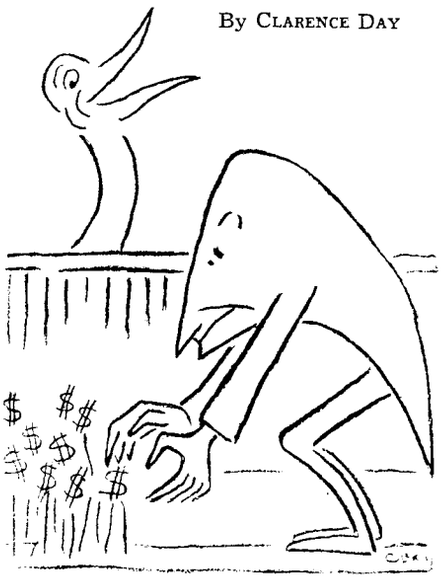
To come right down to it, the only sound advice is rather uninspiring. All magazine writers agree that the way to learn to write is to write. Read the magazines. Any person of intelligence can see what they want and what they don't want. If he can't, he shouldn't be trying to write. Then send the manuscript to the magazine you think it fits best. It will be read all right, the first page at least.

Technical advice from a genuine professional—writer or editor—may be useful in some cases. But it's hard to get, and it won't help a person who hasn't the necessary ability. Story-writing after all, even pulp-writing, is an art of a sort. A story is the product of the writer's personality, his feeling, his sense of language, his observation, his experience. Mechanical technique is only a small part of the total. You can train a man to write correct English. Universities do this. But you can't train him to tell an interesting story.

Jonathan Norton Leonard is the author of "Tools of Tomorrow" and "The Tragedy of Henry Ford." Under two pseudonyms, he has sold six stories since February of this year to Collier's, This Week, *and* The Country Gentleman.

Money Matters

By Clarence Day



In money matters no one seems
Completely sane and sensible.
Above we see the two extremes,
And both are reprehensible.

Ten Days that Shook Two Adventurers

YANKEE KOMISAR. By S. M. Riis with Arthur J. Burks. New York: Robert Speller. 1935. $2.50.

Reviewed by Irina Skariatina

THIS is a fantastic book about the early days of the Russian Revolution, dripping with detail of the most gory and gruesome kind. Though of course it is fiction the writer uses many real names, which will undoubtedly confuse some readers and make them think that they are being told a true story of the Revolution.

It all starts when "hell broke loose with the barking of rifles and the chattering of machine guns" and MacGloin of the British Embassy telephones Commander Riis, Naval Attaché to the American Embassy, that Captain Cromie has just been murdered by the Reds and that "they're on the way now. . . ."

Both MacGloin and Riis flee to the railroad station where, despite the fact that "fully ten thousand" refugees are unable to find accommodation on outgoing trains, they manage to charter a locomotive, box-car, and crew and thus leave Petrograd. However, on the way to Moscow, they are arrested and put in chains. But they kill their Russian guards, the Komisars Galinski and Morosov—and if anyone enjoys reading the description of a couple of particularly hideous murders, here it is. It appears that it is very difficult to choke a man with a beard and that there is a special technique about it. Says MacGloin to Riis, "When you choke a man with a beard you put your hands under his beard, not over it."

Then Riis and MacGloin take the passports of the murdered men and from then on play most successfully the parts of Russian Komisars, without exciting the slightest suspicion anywhere and duping everybody, including Trotsky. The Head Komisar of the Moscow Cheka is immediately taken in by them, implicitly believes that these two foreigners are real Russians, and gives them, without further questioning, important political assignments. After a horrible interlude with a homicidal maniac called Kedrov, Riis-Galinski embarks on an amazing career and becomes more and more important in the Soviet Union, and all kinds of extraordinary things happen to him. At the last, after further honors, he comes to Odessa. In the harbor is a Greek tramp steamer—on it he sails to Constantinople.

Many weird and fantastic tales have been written about Revolutionary Russia, but never anything quite like this one.

Irina Skariatina is a member of the Russian nobility. Her experiences both in the old world and the new, which has now become her country by marriage, are set forth in her books, "A World Can End" and "A World Begins."

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The BOWLING GREEN by Christopher Morley

IT is distinctly odd that the psalm allotted for Evening Prayer of Day 26—the eve of the now famous Supreme Court decision on May 27—is rubricated *Appropinquet deprecatio*—Price-Cutting Approacheth.—And the book trade, finding their current items once more used as "loss leaders" in department stores, may well reread Browning's *The Lost Leader*. "Just for a handful of silver they left us."

Replying to an inquiry from C. K. N. Jr., the story by Frederick Manning which Mr. E. M. Forster described as "perhaps the most exquisite short story of our generation" was "The King of Uruk" in the volume *Scenes and Portraits*. This book is published in London by Peter Davies; I do not know whether it has ever been issued over here.

No one has reproached me for an error in the Green of April 6. Writing from memory I spoke of an old copy of the *Rubaiyat* "loathsomely illustrated by Elihu Vedder." But the edition I had in mind was illustrated by Gilbert James; I reproduce one of the drawings in evidence. I think there *was* also an edition ornamented by Vedder, which I vaguely recall as displeasing.

This is the time of year—or of decade, or of century—for reading Walt Whitman. He does, more than most, make attempt to deal with "the main concern." There are few pleasures more satisfying than seeing the hieroglyphic excitement written on the faces of those who are discovering Walt for the first time.

I don't capitulate rapidly to new poets, but there's one who has turned an ignition key in my mind more than once, Stephen Spender. Being wary, and shy of the various forms of publishers' tohubohu, and also lazy, I prefer to let poets ripen on the shelf awhile until the accidental moment happens when we need each other. But I have a great respect for certain opinions, among others those of Basil Blackwell, publisher in Oxford. Five years ago he wrote me:—

"My 1930 poet who will soon be familiar to collectors is Stephen Spender, and I am going to send you something of his which will be worth keeping."

What Blackwell sent me was copy number 1 (numbered so, and signed) of the little paper-bound volume *Twenty Poems* by Stephen Spender. And since Basil's prescience has never let me down, not since the days when I used to get from him the very first pamphlets of Dorothy Sayers, Aldous Huxley and many others, I knew there would be something worth while. I have found it so in a good many of Spender's verses, which require collaboration on the part of the reader. Those who do not resent the arsenic of thought in their reading will find him worth visit. From that little book of 1930 I quote this:—

'I' CAN NEVER BE GREAT MAN

An 'I' can never be great man.
This known great one has weakness
To friends is most remarkable for weakness:
His ill-temper at meals, dislike of being contradicted,
Only real pleasure fishing in ponds
Only real desire forgetting.

To advance from friends to the composite self
Central 'I' is surrounded by 'I eating'
'I loving,' 'I angry,' 'I excreting,'
And the 'great I' planted in him
Has nothing to do with these

Can never claim its true place
Resting in forehead, secure in his gaze—
'Great I' is an unfortunate intruder
Quarrelling with 'I tiring' and 'I sleeping'
And all those other 'I's, who long for 'We dying.'

Robinson Jeffers has written a sinewy little introduction for the Modern Library edition of his *Roan Stallion and Other Poems*. He calls it "Meditation by a Watermain" and describes how twenty-one years ago some thoughts occurred to him on a trestle that carried a big water-pipe across a gorge in the Carmel Valley (California). He gives the reader a pleasant picture of crossing the high trestle twice—first to carry his dog over, and then with a bundle of firewood. Half way over was a nest of wild bees, and the scent of honey was mixed with that of weathered timber.

The thoughts that came to Jeffers on those trips over the aqueduct are worth considering in the book itself; I shall not swipe them here. They had a large influence on his work and deserve reading by any anxious young poet who is worried about being "original." But I mention the scene because it offers so pleasing a parable of the career of all imaginers. They cross, watchfully, a high trestle over a steep ravine. They cross it twice on every excursion—once to carry the tamed animal of thought, and once to carry the household kindling. Somewhere on the crossing there is always a hive of wild bees. If a bee bites the dog, that's news—sometimes bad news. But if the bees aren't there—or the high trestle—the journey is hardly worth taking.

It always pleases me to discover that a mode of speech supposed very recent is

"FROM WHAT ONCE LOVELY LIP"

of ancient standing. I was reading the volume of *Mark Twain's Speeches* edited by A. B. Paine. In his address to the veterans of the Army of the Tennessee in 1879 Mark said, "But when he clawed your whiskers, and pulled your hair, and twisted your nose, you had to *take it*."

This is the season when many performances of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* are done outdoors. I've been holding for many months a note my colleague Quercus sent me when he saw Max Reinhardt's production of that fairy-tale at the roomy old Auditorium in Chicago, last autumn. It has not yet been seen in New York.)

Old Q. said he attended with misgiving. Frankly, he expected to be bored—he is no lover of large spectacles—and he had been somewhat peevish at the news stories of carloads of trees chopped and brought from California, sprayed with chemicals to arrest wilting. He did not look forward with pleasure to seeing Shakespeare's woodnotes wild chemically treated. But the moment the curtain rose all was justified. There was no longer any realization of being in a theatre: simply a deep perspective of sylvestered hillside, an unspoiled prospect of fairyland. The mind (that annoying encumbrance) was checked with hat and coat; the performance was pure sensual gift to eye and ear. Extraordinary! He had expected perhaps some heavy Victorian pantomime, cumbered with dresses and gear: but those dancing figures, moving so gaily in the forest space (which seemed to reach

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CHICAGO NIGHTINGALE

all the way back to Northern Wisconsin) flashed like silver needles weaving seams and patterns and continuities of grace. The cast was nothing extraordinary; Puck, though excellently impish, had occasionally a disconcerting Hollywood accent and a touch of Penrod Schofield; and the tail end of the piece badly needs cutting; for the spectators, after so much visual loveliness, are in no mood for clowning. But the achievement as a whole is superb; and even to the back of the house came drifting the actual perfume of forest trees. Certainly it is not unElizabethan in spirit: for it is very close to the method described in Ben Jonson's directions for his masques. So add another to our list of midwestern paradoxes, said Quercus: that I had to come to Chicago to see Shakespeare performed twice, perfectly, at opposite ends of the keyboard—here, and at the World's Fair. Nor had I known before that Mendelssohn began his music for the *Dream* at the age of seventeen.

Another musical souvenir of Chicago is a photograph of Guy Ederheimer, Jr., of one of that city's policemen blowing his whistle—the pink celluloid whistle which looks so like a nursery toy and shrills that strange double call along Michigan Avenue. Chicago Nightingale is my title for this picture. Mr. Ederheimer has taken some remarkable photos of Chicago scenes, which Mr. Ben Abramson of the Argus Bookshop is going to include in his edition of a little essay about Chicago first printed in this column, *Old Loopy*.

In regard to Voltaire's innumerably quoted reply to Helvetius ("I do not agree with a word you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it"), Mr. Harry Weinberger makes the interesting comment that "a most careful search to date has failed to discover where the quote comes from in Voltaire's writings. Its correctness has been challenged. Do you have the citation where this quote can be found? S. G. Tallentyre in her *Voltaire in His Letters*, published by Putnam's Sons in 1919, page 65, quotes it. Also in her book *Friend of Voltaire* published by Putnam's Sons in 1907, page 198, it is quoted, but no authority given."

How useful it would have been if the Italian, German and British governments had each thought to send one of their high officials across in the maiden voyage of the *Normandie;* not on any special mission but simply as a graceful compliment to France's achievement. The French, with their keen instinct for the beau geste, would never have forgotten it. It would have done more good than a great many diplomatic conferences.

Unless man's genius for courtesy and sportsmanship can keep pace with his genius for mechanism we are doomed. I read in the papers that the *Normandie* and the *Bremen* passed each other unseen in the dark (or in fog) each driving pell-well in opposite directions. The analogy is uncomfortable.

Might not each nation, or perhaps the League, have a Secretary of Amenities, to keep an eye on possible opportunities for international good manners?

THE OLD MANDARIN went to meet a train at Penn Station. I had gibbered to him about the new streamline service, so he rather expected it to be punctual. It was twenty minutes late.

Naturally a train with that name would take its own time, he remarked, and pointed to the bulletin board.

It was called *The Judiciary.*

Tuned to the Earth

HERBS AND THE EARTH. By Henry Beston. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1935. $2.

MR. BESTON'S new essay and first public words in a long time (it is seven years since he wrote "The Outermost House") is a unique article among the current garden books where the empigeonholing bookman is sure to put it. Readers who know his loam-like, earthen prose will observe his hand in the title and want the volume whether they are beginning or accomplished herbalists or even but humbler radish planters. It is a fervent piece of writing, full of simple spirit and rustic faith. The seasons run with it, though it seems to the present writer a winter book with the hopefulness of spring. Mr. Beston, more than usual, is writing with a closed draught; and his smoke issues birch-white and clear. In a time of mass writing and great bellyfuls of literature in the open market, it is well to know a man whose mind is still tuned to the earth, and who knows that "peace with the earth is the first peace."

His link with herbs is the link with the human past; with things Biblical, Roman, Greek, Oriental, Elizabethan, ancient and persisting. Herbs "have charm and the power to move the mind." And the mind moves with their names: Basil, Angelica, Althea, Costmary, Applemint, Monk's Herb and Woundwort, Dittany and Lovage. Beyond their names is Mr. Beston's garden down in Maine and the living plant and the feelable tissue of the earth. The artist's (Mr. Benson's) woodcuts add to the pleasant conviction of potting and growth. In other words, Mr. Beston's book is also practical.

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place, Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
SKIN FOR SKIN *Winifred Duke* (Little, Brown: $2.).	Long wed Englishman, maddened by little wifely irritations, kills the lady, is tried, acquitted, and misses her terribly.	Pitiful story of little people, victims of blind impulse, and their pathetic lives. Writing exceptionally good.	Worthwhile
DEATH IN A LITTLE TOWN *R. C. Woodthorpe* (Crime Club: $2.)	Cantankerous English estate owner found, slain, by owner of spade that did slaying. Crime solves itself.	Bucolic British atmosphere and character work—fine: sleuthing—almost invisible to eye.	Agreeable
HIGH STAKES *Sidney Horler* (Little, Brown: $2.)	Girl operative of British secret service saves inventor and "naval secret" from thugs of enemy nation.	Something happens in every chapter, none of it credible, but it helps speed the passing moment.	Thriller
MURDER OF A DEAD MAN *Kurt Steel* (Bobbs-Merrill: $2.)	Dachshund and heir to millions murdered. Laconic Hank Hyer, private tec, trails killer, unravels odd puzzle.	The action, speed, and lingo make it worthwhile. The plot came out of the ark.	Lively

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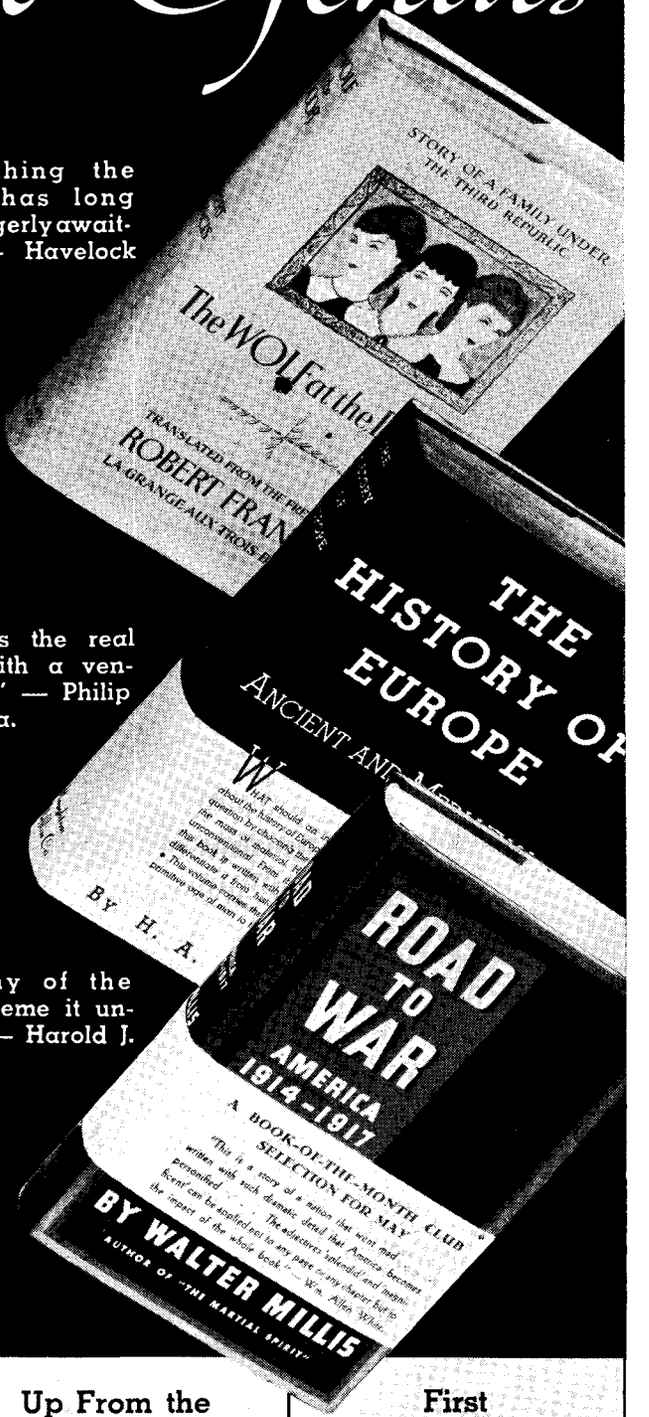

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Fifteen Plans for Keeping the Peace

CHALLENGE TO DEATH. By Fifteen British Authors. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1935. $2.

Reviewed by R. GATEWOOD

"GENTLEMEN may cry peace, peace; but there is no peace"; nor is there any possibility of peace, unless the factors of war are thoroughly examined. It is to that inquiry that the authors of this symposium have addressed themselves. With care and with passionate imagination, they have dissected out the economic viscera, the nervous reflexes, the flabby thinking of their body politic, the heart of the world's greatest empire. They have summarized the existing facts, probed the temper of their compatriots, forecast probable developments; and their unanimous plea is for renewed British leadership in achieving European security.

Unlike Sir Norman Angell's most recent work, this book is not primarily concerned with ideas about war. The descriptive passages are vivid and well-ordered, notably Mr. Heard's chapter on "And Suppose We Fail?" The suggestions for treatment are wide, ranging from Julian Huxley's plans for research by scientists to J. B. Priestley's sane proposal to satirize war, rather than dramatize it. On political prerequisites almost all seem to agree: there must be collective control of armaments, not merely governmental control; and collective sanctions must be established. Furthermore, Mr. P. N. Baker follows up a devastating indictment of dilatory British policies with an impressive amount of evidence to prove that there is really no adequate defense against bombing raids; and, from League conference reports, he has drawn a detailed outline for an International Air Police Force which, far from being a Utopian project, was agreed to in 1932 by all important nations in Europe but the British.

The dangers of air attack reveal how nationalist interests are invoked to further a desire for peace: all the writers have in mind the vulnerable position of London in the face of raids from the Continent; this fear lends a cogency to their appeals which American authors would find hard to duplicate. Likewise, the benefits of international economic solidarity are more obviously apparent to an island, restricted in food supply, than to a group of commonwealths united in a single market; thus, few people on this side of the Atlantic would at present be found to accept the view that nationalism should no longer rule economic relations. Geography and tradition would also prevent the average reader in this country from acknowledging the validity of League decisions, such as must be made before any collective measures can be taken.

On larger issues, there are only incidental comments. Storm Jameson, the editor, can be assumed to have summarized the prevalent opinion when she states that "poverty and war grow in the same soil and have the same smell." The implication of modern social structure, notably the different valuations evolved by production for use and production for vendibility, with the ensuing impetus toward imperialism, have been left comparatively unexamined. It is noteworthy, however, that fascism is generally considered the handmaiden of war, and the citizen is frequently warned not to be flattered by its delusive doctrines. Throughout the book there is some unavoidable repetition, but the diverse styles of the authors have clothed their singleness of purpose with a variety of expression which should draw a response from all types of readers.

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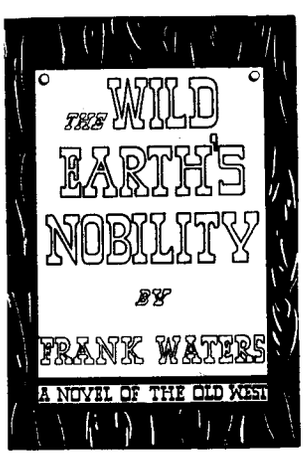

One rarely comes upon a novel whose author knows so much about human nature and is willing to set it down without prejudice and without sentimentality. Scene after scene is of the sort that one reads and never forgets.

We consider this work, giving for once (and at last!) a truly convincing picture of the west—*a most remarkable book!* 456 Pages. $2.50

LIVERIGHT—386 FOURTH AVE., N.Y.C.

A Valiant Effort

THE ART OF HAPPINESS. By John Cowper Powys. New York: Simon & Schuster. 1935. $2.

Reviewed by BASIL DAVENPORT

MR. JOHN COWPER POWYS is a phenomenon which must be nearly unique: he is mystical without being religious. He feels the supernatural aspects of the universe keenly, but he does not accept any teaching, and seems to have no defined beliefs, about the nature of those supernatural aspects. Perhaps on this account he seems to be peculiarly the prey of unhappiness; he has faced the problem, and written this book on the art of escaping from moods of irrational depression, for he says it is only with this irrational unhappiness that he is concerned. It is a valiant effort; he says bravely something that needs to be said when he declares that it is "on the side of evil" to yield to low spirits; but it is unsuccessful by reason of its author's uniqueness. For everything he says is essentially mystical, even his practical suggestions have mystical reasons; and nothing is so nearly impossible to communicate. Within a definite religious tradition, Catholic or Buddhist, it is possible to build up a kind of vocabulary of supernatural experience; but Mr. Powys is in no tradition. The result is likely to be that those who are not naturally religious will have no idea what he means, and the religious will have the dizzying experience of hearing words used as Humpty Dumpty did, to mean whatever he chose.

This difficulty runs throughout the book, from its most fundamental ideas to its details. The primary weapons of the spirit on which Mr. Powys relies are what he calls "the Ichthian leap," "the act of De-carnation," and "the Panergic act"; the first of these is by an effort of will leaping like a fish out of the sea of troubles, if only for a moment; the second letting oneself drift but looking at oneself with an entirely detached eye; the third is the concentration on sensation which the author has recommended in his "Defence of Sensuality." At least two of these are states of mind which it is very difficult to convey; and one cannot help feeling that Mr. Powys has increased his difficulty when he calls this leap "Ichthian" and explains this as a reference to the Sacred Fish of early Christian art. The non-Christian will feel that this has no reason, the Christian that it has the wrong meaning. At the other end of the scale, in the detailed recommendations, is the advice to have "secular rituals" of one's own, a "secular *Introibo ad altare*," such as lighting a fire or lying down at night. But here again, one is reminded that the phrase runs "Introibo ad altare *Dei*," and with no wish to dogmatize, one must say again that those who have a sacramental cast of mind are likely to have accepted already a sacramental (and consistent) explanation of the universe; and others will find this meaningless.

Between these pieces of advice lie a multitude of others, some of them the commonplaces of newspaper philosophers, but all alike presented from so singular a viewpoint that there is not much help in them for normal mortals.

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The Promethean Symbol

DANCE OF FIRE. By Lola Ridge. New York: Harrison Smith & Robert Haas. 1935. $2.

Reviewed by HORACE GREGORY

TO speak of Lola Ridge is to recall a revolutionary tradition in American poetry. No history of its mutations in the last two decades would be complete without her name; and in this context her place is singular, for there can be no thought of substituting her work for that of any other poet. Though her performance has been notoriously uneven, sometimes ornate with moments of ill-chosen grandeur, sometimes austere and clean, there can be no doubt, I think, of her serious and unified intention. Human martyrdom has been her theme, particularly the martyrdom of the poor and disenfranchised, and it is significant, I think, that her poetry of recent years should find its best expression in the fire symbol.

If we remember Shelley's adaptation of the Prometheus legend and then impose upon it a memory of Emerson's "Brahma," we will gain some understanding of the synthesis revealed in Lola Ridge's poetry; the seeming paradox dissolves and there can be no quarrel between those elements which advocate the red flag of the U. S. S. R. and those which recognize the "fire-head" of Christ upon the Cross. To read such poetry, we must extend its meaning beyond the specific areas of political or economic interpretation, and we must grant Lola Ridge the right to evolve her own definition of a chosen symbol. To deny this right is to deny the very premise on which her present book, "Dance of Fire," is grounded, for here the sonnet sequence, "Via Ignis," discloses a consummation of her purpose. Almost without exception the other poems in the book yield to its central theme, and the last poem converts the martyrdom of Van Der Lubbe into a fiery symbol to be remembered by the German working class.

An early statement of "Via Ignis" may be found in Lola Ridge's "Red Flag":

> Red light burning down the centuries . . .
> Red fire dwindling to a spark but never out . . .
> Gleaming a moment on Bunker Hill . . . sinking,
> a blown-out flame,
> leaving a deeper greyness . . .
> Red Flag over the domes of Moscow. . . .

It was as though the wind in the alleys of "The Ghetto," "carrying flame," had discovered tinder and then transformed itself to larger meaning. In "Firehead" the symbol reached its first culmination in the Crucifixion scene. Here the image of the young Christ on the Cross resembled the pagan sacrifice of youth in spring, and was the very life of heresy, opposing the Roman State as well as that authority derived from Moses in the person of the Pharisee. A Promethean resurrection was foreshadowed in the transference of godhead to the slaves and the awakening of revolt against the masters.

If we accept the foregoing premise, Lola Ridge's "Via Ignis," a cycle of twenty-eight sonnets, is of greater importance to contemporary literature than Edna Millay's recent "Epitaph for the Race of Man." Individually and at first reading the Millay sonnets reveal far more felicity of phrasing than is disclosed in "Via Ignis." (I make this comparison because both sequences are ambitious in their exterior design.) Yet upon rereading, the "Via Ignis" cycle seems to resolve a number of its more difficult pretensions. If we consider the entire sequence as a single poem divided into three sections, it is clear that Lola Ridge has enforced a discipline beyond a mere proficiency in the sonnet form and that the work is more than a discernible thesis on a so-called universal condition of humanity. It is a discipline that demands a courage which transcends the usual conversion of experience into esthetic form; it is that kind of courage which sustained D. H. Lawrence in "living through" the paradox of the serpent-phœnix symbol of Aztec Mexico. In this process, the danger lies in making the concept of an idea all-inclusive, and the symbol of its conception is likely to outgrow its limitations and then disintegrate. Its minor flaws, however, do not impede the action of "Via Ignis."

Lola Ridge's position in contemporary American poetry is unique and her vitality has been sustained throughout a difficult period. I believe this last book to be her best and that it will be remembered as the mature production of a poet who has recreated the Promethean destiny in her own signature.

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The New Books

Fiction

CAMEL TREK. By Rex Regan. New York: Robert Speller. 1935. $2.50.

Mr. Regan founds his novel of the Overland Trail order upon the Government "camel corps" expedition as conducted by General Edward Fitzgerald Beale through the Southwest in 1857. The noted Beale, one-time of the Navy, a hero, with Kit Carson, in the conquest of California, ex-superintendent of Indian Affairs in California, and an assiduous desert trail maker, roused Jefferson Davis, Secretary of War, to an enthusiastic interest in the employment of camels for transportation purposes in the Southwest. He was commissioned by President Buchanan to try out the invoice of beasts by essaying to open a wagon road from Fort Defiance in northwestern New Mexico to the Colorado River of California's borderline. The expedition was organized at San Antonio, Texas, with some twenty-five camels, in June, 1857; marched by way of El Paso, Zuñi, and points west, to the Colorado, and about the middle of January exhibited fourteen of the camels in Los Angeles.

"Camel Trek" adapts these facts to the requirements of fiction. It is, then, an Overland Trail story with a new scene. It is, again, a story of youth impelled to the adventure trail. From the village of Marvin, western Massachusetts, Dick Henry Lansing, together with a friend, enlists in the expedition—the call is in his blood. He leaves the girl Margaret; the expedition has no women in its personnel but he does not fail of women along the way. The story is exceedingly deft in its characterization. The lusty episodes attendant upon the management of the foreign beasts, and upon the progress of the expedition, composed of soldiers and packers and camel tenders, from border town to border town and thence through the hostile desert, are strongly put. But the chief interest remains, as it should, in the contrasting characters of the two Marvin youths; and particularly in the mental and moral slant with which Dick is invested. He finds action, adventure, romance—withal finds himself and knows himself. The author leaves him at the end of that trail as one disillusioned but none the less somewhat heroic.

E. L. S.

IN THE SEALED CAVE. By Louis Herrman. Appleton-Century. 1935. $2.

Many people, perhaps, have amused themselves by imagining new commonwealths and races; but not many have proposed to themselves a strict hypothesis and confined themselves to the logical consequences. That is what is done here. The author represents himself as being acquainted with a descendant of Lemuel Gulliver, who shows him some of his ancestral papers, containing an account of a fifth voyage which the traveller was prevented from sending to Dean Swift. This time Gulliver was wrecked on a Mediterranean island and found his way into a vast cavern which was tenanted by a naked sunhuman race. He describes them in such detail that the author is able, from the evidence of the manuscript, to identify them as a surviving colony of Moustierian men, who had taken refuge there during the Ice Age, and whose inherited terror of the frozen world outside had hardened into a rigid taboo against ever leaving the cave. On this basis he gives us a complete and wholly reasonable account of their society, analyzing the chemical elements and vitamins in a diet chiefly, but not wholly, composed of bats and fungi; accounting for their three endogamous races by a knowledge of primitive peoples which was of course lacking to Gulliver; further applying the Mendelian laws of inheritance to explain a sex-linked strain of blindness among them; and in short supplying a full account of such religion, arts, and customs as had developed in his imaginary tribe.

The author's scientific conscience appears to be strong; he makes no statement for which he cannot at least show a probability; and the result is a remarkably ingenious tour-de-force. But one finds oneself harboring the immoral wish that his scientific conscience were a little weaker, if that would permit him to introduce a little more of the usual appeal of fiction. A few scientifically-minded readers will find this book of great interest; but for most it is to be feared that its ingenuity is wasted.

B. D.

ALL GIANTS WEAR YELLOW BREECHES. By Vernon Patterson. Scott. 1935. $2.50.

It may be that Mr. Patterson is planning a series of novels that will follow the character of John Moore through some of the more spectacular activities mentioned in the "self-portrait" of the author on the jacket of this book. In such a case, this first novel might, with some alterations, fit into the general scheme of the work. As it is, however, he has devoted a three hundred and seventy-six page novel to the early boyhood and beginning adolescence of John Moore, and the result, aside from being disproportionate and repetitious beyond reason, is generally a disappointing bore.

The activities and intellectual, emotional, and spiritual development of a young boy are likely, except in the hands of the most consummate literary artist, to present just such a dilemma as Mr. Patterson here offers the reader. Unendowed with anything remotely approaching such artistry, he must be content in this instance to found his case on an earnest, if considerably laborious, presentation of his hero's childhood—his small fears, resentments, and aspirations, his trial-and-error discoveries, the myriad impact of external stimulæ upon the cortex of the juvenile cerebrum. This material, in his hands, is limited in the extreme and the reader maintains his interest in the circumscribed and uninspired document, only with the greatest of difficulty.

A. C. B.

FLY-BY-NIGHT. By Eric Hatch. Little, Brown. 1935. $2.

This is both a concoction and somewhat of a confection by an amiable young writer who has a nice humorous touch in telling of the harebrained and the hairbreadth. It's a little bit like Wodehouse, as has, I believe, been remarked often of Mr. Hatch—except that there is a wealth of goofy expressions in Wodehouse over which Mr. Hatch has not the command. Nevertheless he tells a crisp story about quite impossible proceedings and holds your interest and entertains you. This is distinctly a hammock book for the sum-

(*Continued on page* 21)

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The PHŒNIX NEST

BY WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

ALGERNON BLACKWOOD, always a favorite author of mine, is now sixty-six, and I'm glad he's at work on a sequel to the one volume of his autobiography so far published, which, in this country, was back in January, 1924. It was called "Episodes before Thirty," and it was one of the most engaging and exciting autobiographical books I have ever read. He expects to call the second volume of his life-story "Episodes After Thirty." Dutton will publish it, as they published yesterday (June 7th) his new novel, "The Fruit Stoners." . . . The manuscript of what is probably the first *O. Henry* story has been discovered in Austin, Texas, and is now in the possession of Eugene Digges, the rare book-collector. It is an unfinished story, written in pencil, and was found in the back of a ledger kept by O. Henry when he was clerking in Tobin's Drug Store in the '80's. This ledger contains many pages filled with entries of B. B. Cordial, Jam, Ginger, and Wampoles' Cod Liver Oil. Then the young man devoted several pages to more dramatic reading. The fragment of the story opens with the illness of a feeble old man nursed by a quadroon girl.

The Book Clinic of the American Institute of Graphic Arts, in their recent exhibition, presented the choices of a jury consisting of *Helen Gentry* of Holiday House, *Helmut Lehmann-Haupt* of the Columbia University Library, *Elizabeth Riley* of Brentano's, and *Philip Van Doren Stern* of Simon and Schuster. All the publishers had been invited to submit entries of their best-manufactured books, and the choices represent an interesting cross-section of present-day efforts in American trade book design. Of over 200 entries submitted, 25 received the unqualified approval of the jury and 16 were recommended for special details. Of the 25, Random House ranked highest, being commended for "Poems" by *W. H. Auden*, "Portraits and Prayers" by *Gertrude Stein*, "Rameses to Rockefeller" by *Charles Harris Whitaker*, "The Daring Young Man on the Flying Trapeze," by *William Saroyan*, and "Ulysses," by *James Joyce*. The latter four of these books were designed by *Ernst Reichl*, the first by *Joseph Blumenthal*. Smith & Haas came next with four chosen books, three of which were designed by *Evelyn Harter*, the other being Mary Shelley's "*Frankenstein*," designed and illustrated by *Lynd Ward*. . . . *Nathalie Sedgwick Colby's* new novel, her first in several years, "For Life," will be published in September by William Morrow & Company. . . . In the fall Harcourt, Brace will have ready a new collection of short stories by *Kay Boyle*, to be called "The White Horses of Vienna." This publisher claims also the "discovery" of a brilliant young English novelist, *Pamela Hansford Johnson*, and announces her novel under the queer title of "This Bed Thy Centre" for the autumn. A member of the Harcourt, Brace editorial staff found a short-story of the novelist's in a little magazine called *Direction*, and through correspondence with the author and her agents, her novel was secured.

In the "Asia Book-Shelf," conducted by *Pearl S. Buck*, the magazine *Asia*, at 40 East 49th Street, intends to give notice to all the important books about the Orient in the English language, and to be a source of authoritative information about books in this special field. . . . In the fall Harcourt, Brace will publish "It Seems to Me," by *Heywood Broun*, a collection of more than a hundred columns and occasional pieces, culling the best from the enormous amount of journalism Heywood has done. The same firm will also bring out *Jim Whitall's* "English Years." Whitall is well-known throughout the literary and publishing world. . . . The Limited Editions Club is holding a second competition in book illustration, offering prizes totaling $7,000. For details address them at 551 Fifth Avenue, this city. . . . I hear that *James Earle Fraser* is to put a memorial tablet in the studio for years occupied by *Edwin Arlington Robinson* at the MacDowell Colony in Peterboro, New Hampshire. . . . *Conrad Aiken's* first venture into the field of the novel of crime and horror is "King Coffin," the manuscript of which he has forwarded to Charles Scribner's Sons from the medieval cottage in Rye, England, where he lives. He is now working on the translation of a Spanish novel, "Pillar of Salt" by *Thomás Borras*. . . . *Louise Bogan*, the poet, is completing a new book of poems to be called "Sleeping Fury," also to be a Scribner publication. . . .

Paul Engle, who wrote "American Song," trained in May with his college boat club for the summer "eights" at Oxford. He has written a thousand lines of verse for his new book of poems, and expects to return to America for its publication in the autumn. . . . A twenty-seven year old artist, *Kreigh Collins*, who is doing his fifth mural on the walls of the Ottawa Hills Library of Grand Rapids, Michigan, has included *Kenneth Roberts's* lusty character, Cap Huff (of "Arundel" and "Rabble in Arms") in a panel of characters from famous tales and novels. The Cap stands with the Three Musketeers, Til Eulen Spiegel, David Copperfield, Robin Hood, Sir Galahad, Gargantua, and Carmen! The mural will be completed this summer. . . . *Emanuel Eisenberg*, the poet and short-story writer, now a member of the publicity staff of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, is completing a novel, "Behold the Good," which Covici, Friede will publish next season. . . . At its eighty-first Commencement exercises on June tenth, Rockford College, Illinois, will confer the honorary degree of L.H.D. on *Harriet Monroe*, founder and editor since 1912 of *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*. Her "Chosen Poems" has recently been published by Macmillan.

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The Clearing House

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Inquiries, accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope, should be directed to Miss Loveman, in care of The Saturday Review.

A BALANCED RATION FOR WEEK-END READING

MALAISIE. By Henri Fauconnier. *Macmillan.*

MAN OF THE RENAISSANCE. By Ralph Roeder. *Viking.*

A ROOM OF ONE'S OWN. By Virginia Woolf. *Harcourt, Brace.*

The Department Store in Fiction

A. B. C. of Brooklyn, N. Y., *is on the hunt for novels which have American department stores for background. He remembers Claudia Cranston's* READY TO WEAR, *which appeared three years ago and Rupert Hughes's* MISS 318, *which came out about* 1920.

THE most recent book of which the scene was laid in a department store was James Gould Cozzens's CASTAWAY (Longmans, Green), a brief tale which missed being exceedingly fine by a disappointing ending. It is not, however, the type of story which I imagine A. B. C. has in mind, for it is a fantasy, and though in the course of its description of the adventures of a sort of modern Robinson Crusoe left to fend for himself and against the enemy in a vast empty shop it slips in considerable paraphernalia of a modern emporium, it is far from being the normal narrative of such a concern. More in line with what A. B. C. desires is A BRILLIANT FUTURE (Vanguard), which is a portrayal of life with its loves and hopes, ambitions and disappointments in a large store. With a good theme, the book is a rather indifferent performance. Nor is Ann Pinchot's SHRINE OF FAIR WOMEN (Richard R. Smith) a smoothly sustained work. Concerned with half a dozen employees in a large Fifth Avenue shop, it presents the play and interplay of their emotions and their round of living in rather disjointed fashion. John Bascom's GREAT SALE (King) depicts a department store on a large scale in the grip of the depression, and Ruth Seinfel's LADY BUYER (Covici-Friede) is a realistic portrayal of the mechanism of such an establishment. A. B. C. qualified his request by asking for titles of stories which have American stores for background; otherwise I should include in his list such books as Zola's THE LADIES' PARADISE and Balzac's AT THE SIGN OF THE CAT AND RACKET.

Recent Italian Novels

Mrs. I. G. H. of Bedford, Ind., *says the program committee of which she is a member is short on the subject of Italian fiction and would like to have the titles of a few novels by Italians about Italians.*

If she wants a book which reflects life under the Fascist régime, and reflects it with tenderness as well as savage satire, she can do no better than get Ignazio Silone's delightful FONTAMARA (Smith & Haas). I read this brief novel in the German translation before it appeared in English and found it utterly charming. A little of that charm had evaporated, I thought, in the English version which did not lend itself quite as easily to the peasant simplicity and ingenuousness of the original, but it remained nevertheless a touching tale, one that, had it not been so tragic in its depiction of the ruthlessness of autocracy, would have been most winsome comedy.

Some two or three years ago I read a novel on a much larger scale which also had its points, though humor was not one of them. This was Guglielmo Ferrero's SEVEN VICES (Harcourt, Brace), a story of Italy in our own times, the scene of which was laid in Rome, and which revolved about a young Roman matron falsely accused of murdering her husband. As befits the work of the daughter of a renowned Roman historian, the narrative was projected against a backdrop of scrupulous accuracy, and the tale moved with vivacity and color. Another work of some strength, and of what Vincent Sheean characterized as "ferocious authenticity," is INDIFFERENT ONES (Dutton), in which Alberto Moravia presents a picture of a modern middle-class Italian family. Sexual passion is the pivot on which this novel turns, and it has the taint of decadence. Pirandello is best known to the American public as a dramatist, but his volume of short stories, published here under the title HORSE IN THE MOON (Dutton), showed him a capable practitioner of that form. It is interesting in this connection to note that most of the contemporary Italian novelists have at one time or another tried themselves out at the short story.

I am enumerating here only such works as are recent and are to be had in English translation. Because they appeared considerably earlier than those already mentioned I am omitting, for instance, the novels by d'Annunzio, Fogazzaro, and Grazia Deledda among others, which are to be had in English versions, and a large number of works which have had wide currency in Italian but have appeared only in that language. More to add two further titles to Mrs. I. G. H.'s list than because they are notable I mention Dino Segre's THE MAN WHO SEARCHED FOR LOVE (McBride), a novel in the purest vein of French sophistication, and THE WOMAN WHO INVENTED LOVE (Dutton), by Guido da Verona. This last is in effect, though possibly not in intention, a vigorous scoring of Roman society.

Deafness in Literature

V. T., *who is a member of the Library Science class at* Gallaudet College, Washington, D. C., *the only college for the deaf in the United States, says that her group is compiling bibliographies of literature which contains any mention of the deaf. She wishes the titles of any plays or novels I may know which contain deaf characters or allusions to deafness.*

As I read her question an uneasy sense seized upon me that just beyond the reach of my memory were dozens of references of the sort she wants. But to my shame I admit that they have eluded me, and all I can produce is a title or two that I have

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remembered and another one or two that I have managed to dig up. I hope that those of my readers who have others at the ends of their pens will send them in. The book that stands out most clearly in my mind as having a deaf character is Scott's PEVERIL OF THE PEAK, but Fenella really doesn't count, for in the end she is discovered to have been merely assuming the role of a deaf mute. If I remember rightly, the old grandmother (delightful creation!) in Mazo de la Roche's "Jalna" series (Little, Brown) is deaf. And who was it, and in what book, who carried a silver ear trumpet? I don't mean Furness, the editor of the Variorum Shakespeare, but some fictional character. V. T. may know of Florence Riddell's SILENT WORLD (Lippincott), the story of two young people who meet at a school for the deaf, fall in love, and eventually marry, and whose experiences in their world of isolation make painful but illuminating reading. And perhaps she knows, too, of Margaret Prescott Montague's CLOSED DOORS (Houghton Mifflin). This is a collection of short stories some of which are about the blind, and the rest about the deaf. There must be numerous plays about the deaf, or surely many in which the deaf figure, but the only one I can cite at the moment is in French, Gaston Devore's SOURDS-MUETS (Paris: Ollendorf). I am told by a helpful young man at the Information desk of the Public Library that the New York School for the Deaf has an excellent library and well-trained librarians who could in all probability furnish V. T. with a long list of titles. His seems a good suggestion to follow.

American Life and Fiction

Miss Katherine Terrill of New York City, apropos of the question in the May 4th issue of the Clearing House asking for novels and readable untechnical non-fiction dealing with social and economic development in American life during and since the 1880 period, writes: "My mind turned at once to Parrington's BEGINNINGS OF CRITICAL REALISM IN AMERICA (v. 3 of MAIN CURRENTS IN AMERICAN THOUGHT)."

The New Books

(*Continued from page 18*)

mer; it's nothing more than that. You can get some chuckles and maybe one hearty laugh out of it, and a pleasant little flicker of young romance. Mr. Hatch can draw his girls attractively. Tippet Raymond and her friend Dolores are girls you'd like to meet, and even though they're in the line —meaning the chorus—or would be if they could get a job, they're rather more intelligent and attractive than the average chorine.

Mr. Hatch evidently knows "correct" people at first hand, how stuffy they can be, and, on the other hand, occasionally how rather stalwart. He can also make up absurd people rather well, like the man who ran the Wigwam Camp and addressed people as "White Uncle." That his plot is shot through with the steepest improbabilities doesn't very much matter; one has a good time with it. Somehow we think he could do even better than the present volume, if he'd take more trouble. As it is his books are like cocktails, good for you if you don't have too many.

W. R. B.

Miscellaneous

NEW MINDS FOR OLD. By Esmé Wingfield-Stratford. Macmillan. 1935. $3.

In considering this type of book, the reviewer gladly summons the quality of mercy. The theme, the intent, the position, the advice, the mental scenery, are all commendable. The book is timely, pertinent; its theme sets forth that the reorientation demanded by the world turmoil must be directed in large measure to a sterner, keener, better disciplined, freer from empty illusions and tempting wish-thought, state of mind—a reform of the uses of endowment far more than a reshaping of environment, including the social-economic order. The major thread of the argument is that of mind-training; its minor threads are many and loose.

It rises to its best in the pragmatic con-

(*Continued on next page*)

Over the Counter

The Saturday Review's Guide to Current Attractions

Trade Mark	*Label*	*Contents*	*Flavor*
THE KINGS OF BEACON Hill *Christine Whiting Parmenter* (Crowell: $2.)	Romance	Son's candy-counter bride becomes problem to Boston family with Traditions.	Above Average
AND MR. WYKE BOND *W. B. Maxwell* (Appleton-Century: $2.)	Novel	Curious novel whose hero's chosen career is attendance at all smart social functions.	Sugared alum
LOVE AND THE LIEUTENANT *Robert W. Chambers* (Appleton-Century: $2.50.)	Costume Romance	The sweet affair between the officer negotiating for Hessian mercenaries and the Spirited and Beautiful American Girl Spy who tries to prevent the deal.	Nice
LOBO LAW *Will Ermine* (Morrow: $2.)	Western	"With fists and six-guns, fighting with the savage ruthlessness of the wolf, he defended his lands and his life"—from a double-crossing brother.	Standard

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The New Books

(*Continued from preceding page*)

cluding section on "Mind in Action," offers as admirable a critique of Freud and his system as can be found in like compass, and closes with a weak anti-climax on the fine art of life. And on the way are many rather lean chapters, Victorian in their discursiveness, and too closely addressed to British conditions to appeal to American readers. There is an obsolete attack on the sterilities of logic, but a failure to recognize the vital and going logic that underlies progressive science. And there is far too much moralizing of an evangelical temper, and some citation of questionable authorities. The more meaty chapters may be judged by professional standards and found not wanting, but the rest cannot so qualify.

That mind-lore has become a profession does not debar able observers of human nature from making their appeal to the lay reader in the open forum of discussion. But the modern temper does not readily accept 450 pages, expanded by way of none too relevant detours. It demands a crisper, terser presentation. Certainly with the times so much out of joint, new minds are needed for adjustment to the changing order.

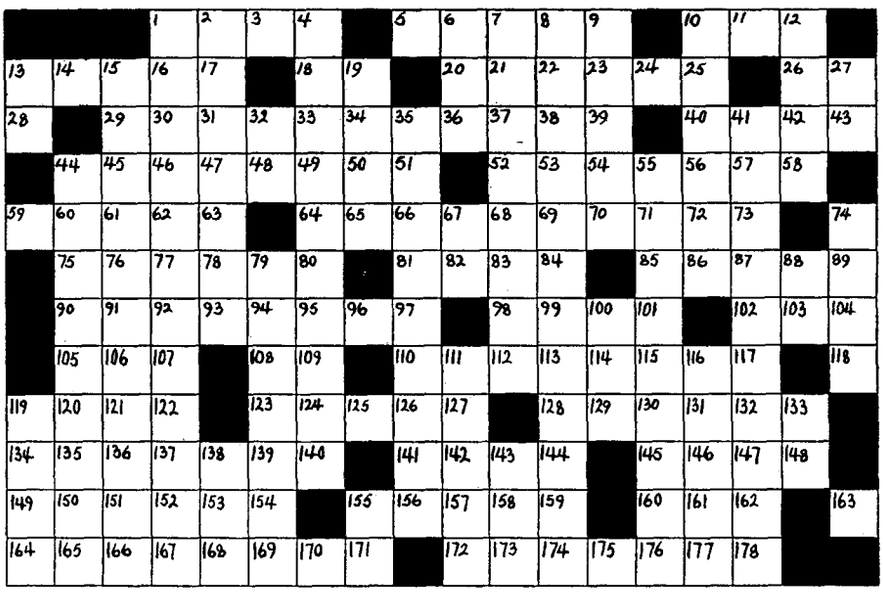
J. J.

Brief Mention

If Martin Hare's *Diary of a Pensionnaire* (Harpers: $2.50) had come before E. M. Delafield's *Provincial Lady* had made its manner familiar the book would doubtless have found much praise for its charm. As it is the tang has gone out of it and the comments of the young Irish girl who confides to her journal impressions of life in a French pension come like water after wine. * * * Despite the fact that Rollin G. Osterweis's *Rebecca Gratz* (Putnam: $2.75) makes its bow with an Introduction by Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach, who vouches for the fact that this biography of the lovely Philadelphia Jewess whom Irving loved and Scott used as the original of Rebecca in *Ivanhoe* is based in part on hitherto unpublished material, it is a slight affair. Its fictionized chronicle is saccharine in the extreme. * * * Among a heterogeneous collection of books are two volumes for the vacationist,—*Away to the Gaspé* (Dodd, Mead: $2.50), by Gordon Brinley, with illustrations by Putnam Brinley, a vivacious account of a camping trip in a little frequented section of Canada, and *The London Scene* (McBride: $2.50), by H. V. Morton, which its author describes as "an A B C of the City and the West End." It is a guide, street by street, in some quarters almost house by house, to literary and historic London. * * * Two books that will be welcome to the student of sociology and civic welfare are *Social Changes during Depression and Recovery, 1934* (University of Chicago Press: $1), edited by William F. Ogburn, which contains a series of articles by specialists covering such topics as "Movements of Population," "The Relief Situation," "Social Adjustments in Cities," etc., and the *Social Work Year Book* (Russell Sage Foundation: $4), edited by Fred S. Hall. This last is the 1935 issue of a valuable compendium on organized activities in social work and in related fields.

Double-Crostics: No. 63

By ELIZABETH S. KINGSLEY



DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle, you must guess twenty-four words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Unless otherwise indicated, the author is English or American.

The solution of last week's *Double-Crostic* will be found on page 24 of this issue.

DEFINITIONS	WORDS
I. Waning, growing smaller.	137 33 70 126 161 40 113 147 27 63
II. A Hawthorne character.	120 162 82 42 140 11 38 98 80
III. Orderly formation; grade.	91 7 176 106
IV. Revel in honor of Bacchus.	14 174 170 73
V. Character in "Merry Wives of Windsor."	25 30 142 151 118 164 123
VI. Play by John Galsworthy (2 words).	132 83 169 54 149 77 94 125
VII. Instrument for recording muscle work.	127 109 75 18 3 89 26 67 101
VIII. Dipterous (compound).	100 34 108 85 119 154 97 104 13
IX. A grudging money giver (slang).	29 114 5 37 87 139 74 145
X. To engage deeply.	2 66 93 56 130 163 9
XI. Trifling in amount (slang, comp.).	102 60 41 90 35 10
XII. Kind of melon.	160 156 96 84 107 152 146 15
XIII. Impermanent, vanishing.	131 165 86 115 31 134 79 153 51 122
XIV. Tall flowering plant of old-fashioned gardens.	124 49 155 144 111 135 45 172 158
XV. Animal celebrated by Masefield.	150 133 72 62 6
XVI. Skepticism, agnosticism.	21 78 48 166 178 95 88 141
XVII. Froward, peevish.	105 110 57 16 44 65 59 117
XVIII. Rudest type of stone implement.	43 46 143 71 36 103
XIX. Exclusive right of possession.	175 52 171 61 17 64 4 92 148
XX. Inventor of thermometer.	128 177 1 50 168 24 121 22 69 116
XXI. Followers of Wykliffe in 14th and 15th centuries.	76 129 81 68 136 32 47 159
XXII. Baghdad is its capital.	99 167 112 20
XXIII. Bearing woolly tufts (bot.).	19 39 53 8 157 173 58 12
XXIV. Root of the taro.	23 55 28 138

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PERSONALS

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4-ROOM NEW COTTAGE, all conveniences, beautiful view, near Mt. Adams. Randolph, N. H. $150 per season. Write: V. D. Lowe, Box 4, Randolph, N. H.

AMERICAN WOMAN (Protestant), quiet, well balanced, keen sense of humor, desires correspondence with intelligent, cultured man "Fifty-ish" of similar traits. Box 502-A.

TWO LADIES desire quiet, reasonable boarding place near swimming hole for July. Vermont preferred. Box 503-A.

WAGER: that you exist. That you are a man, 28-35, possessing intelligence, sense of humor, *just enough idealism, and sufficient gambling* spirit to chance epistolary acqaintance with Philadelphian who hopes she has what she thinks you have, and who needs resurrection from present moronic environment. Box 504-A.

WHAT BETTER ENVIRONMENT for efficient work or healthful rest? Your own studio or cabin of solid logs in a hemlock grove near lively brook—300 acres to explore—lower Berkshires, elevation 1,200, restricted private property, ten minutes state highway—deed including 3 acres (30 city lots) own selection—one price—own terms. Box 505-A.

SWIM IN THE SOUND! Rent a Long Island home reasonably, full of books, Colonial furniture, fireplaces, piano. On Inlet point overlooking Sound. Salt water on three sides. Private beach, wide porches, pines, gardens, tennis court, garages, stable. Box 506-A.

COOL CHARMING APARTMENT TO SUBLEASE—July, August, September. Near Park, Fifth. Spacious living room (fireplace, bay window), bedroom, kitchen (gas stove) big bathroom, Colonial furniture, Turkish rugs, books. Full sunlight. $60. Box 507-A.

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CITY STORIES SYNDICATE, where are you? Ada Waren.

YOUNG MAN wants inexpensive week-ends within two hours of New York City where *swimming can be had without car. Gentile.* Give week-end rates. Box 498-A.

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Trade Winds

BY P. E. G. QUERCUS

OLD Quercus, probably for his immoderate indulgence in strawberries, has been having midriff trouble; so this week he relies mostly upon this department's high-spirited correspondents. ☞It need not be thought however that Q's momentary gastric grievance means that he is depressed. ☞Far from it: his theme-song is still *Withers Shall Not Wring Tonight* which he thinks is the perfect title for a ditty, and some day he intends to write it—or, as a labor-saving device, he will give a free subscription to Trade Winds for a year to the author of the best poem appropriate to that title.

☞First among our correspondents this week is the Editor Himself, Mr. Canby, who writes most interestingly from the Gran Hotel Londres, Madrid, under date May 15. Mr. Canby reports:—

"A book fair is in progress, with talks by authors daily—but they have a plaza to give it in instead of Wanamaker's, and a little theatre in which Lope de Vega and I suppose some moderns are presented at the leisure hour, which here is 7:30. One or two ambassadors a day testify to the excellence of Spanish literature.

"I went to the Feria de Libros later. It is in the midst of Spain's most monumental modern buildings — a double boulevard with double rows of trees, under one line a row of gay white booths with blue lettered tops, each for a publisher, certainly one-eighth of a mile of them. A row of loud speakers in the trees discoursed music, and the crowd walked up and down inspecting the open stalls, and doing everything but buy books. A *tribuna de autore* at intervals, from which I suppose the writers made their speeches. I was struck by the amount of scientific, economic, educational books, and the very large number of reprints of standard works in proportion to what seemed a very, very small proportion of *novedads*, or new books. The most popular booths were for children, and then that best known American in Europe, Mickey Mouse, was all over the place followed by the three little pigs. Very few books from the English—no new ones that I saw—in fact internationality seems to be confined to the highbrow-international intellectuals like Tagore, Marx, Wilde, Hardy, Hamsun, etc.—and the international lowbrows, Curwood, the detective story writers, et al. O. Henry was there with "Picarescu sentimental" which fits him pretty well. I don't think they read much in this country. They can't, for they live on the streets, and talk all the time."

☞A courteous note from M. L. mysteriously bids us visit a new bookshop at 115 East 57th Street which he assures us will afford an item of interest; but Old Q. isn't doing much walking this week and will have to wait—unless some volunteer will investigate? ☞A good many of our friends now leaving college are writing to ask if we know of any jobs available. We have trained young librarians, editors, booksellers, stenographers, proofreaders, etc., all set for what the world may offer. ☞Does anyone know any hopeful openings?

☞Professor J. DeLancey Ferguson of Western Reserve University, a frequent contributor to this Review, in the June issue of *Modern Language Notes* very interestingly traces the plot of Joseph Conrad's famous story *The Duel* (also known as *The Point of Honour*) to an article in *Harper's Magazine* for September 1858. The infectiously humorous tone of this grand tale is always a delight and a surprise to Conrad readers. Professor Ferguson makes the sagacious comment that "Its having come to him ready-made as to plot explains why it is so much gayer than most of the stories he developed from his own resources." ☞C. L. S. of Pueblo, Colorado, gently reproaches Old Q. for not getting round the country more. He says:—

"Have you ever roamed about the interior of Louisiana or Arkansas? Do you know Bougalusa, or Bauxite? Have you ever seen the pottery made in Camden or Benton? The bathing at Hot Springs is still good. Get into Audubon and trace his wanderings.

"I once toured that country for a trade journal whose subscribers were managers of 'company stores' and I saw lumber camps, mill towns and coal mine dynasties and wrote pieces for the edification of said managers. I saw much on the poetic side which I could not use. I was in out of the way places all along the mountains from Harper's Ferry to the hills about Birmingham.

"Get down there some day."

☞That suggestion about tracing Audubon's wanderings is an excellent idea. Q. gets around as much as he can, but willingly admits his ignorance.

☞Mr. Reginald Wright Kauffman, the diligent Post-Impressionist of the Washington *Post*, has discovered a minor Pulitzer mystery. Why was Audrey Wurdemann's *Bright Ambush*, which won the recent P. P. for poetry persistently referred to as her first book—when Mr. Kauffman well remembers that *The House of Silk*, by Audrey Wurdemann, was published by Harold Vinal in 1927?

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 62)

ROBERT BRIDGES—
"TRIOLET"

All women born are so perverse
No man need boast their love possessing—
If nought seem better, nothing's worse;
All women born are so perverse
From Adam's wife, that proved a curse,
Though God had made her for a blessing.

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